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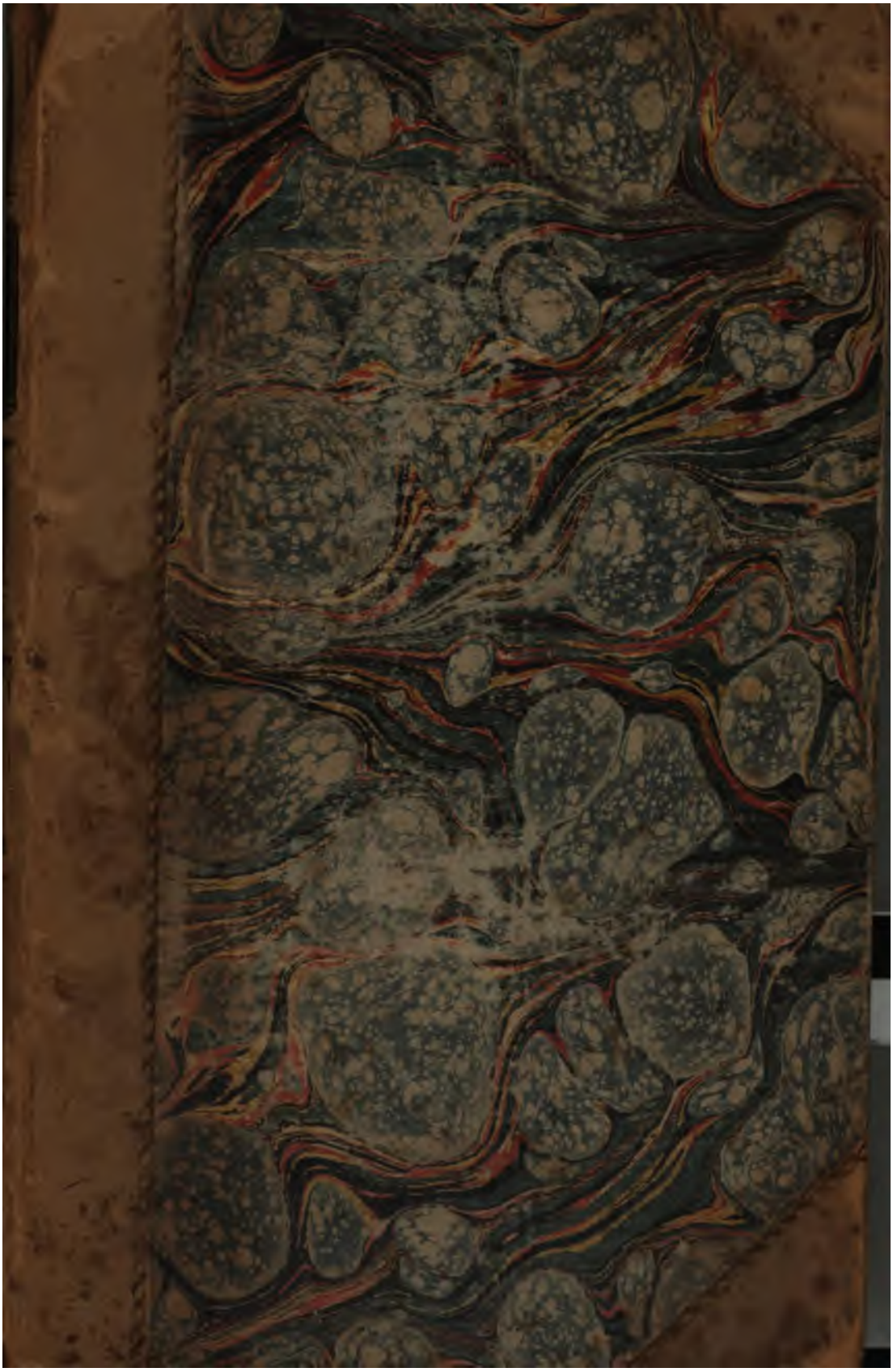

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MEMOIRS

OF

COUNT SEGUR.

VOL. III.

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MEMOIRS

AND

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

COUNT SEGUR,

AMBASSADOR FROM FRANCE

TO THE COURTS OF RUSSIA AND PRUSSIA,

&c. &c.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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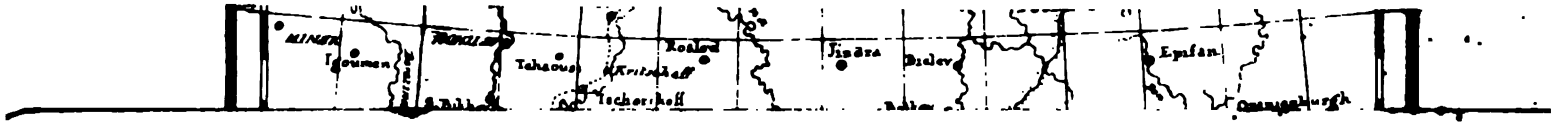
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MEMOIRS,

AND

RECOLLECTIONS.

I HAD but just succeeded in terminating a long, important and difficult negociation, and in overcoming the obstacles which were thrown in my way, on the one hand by the jealous activity of the English merchants, and on the other by the unfavorable disposition of the Russian ministers, when a new career was opened to me.

Destined to be placed in situations of endless variety, I was now about to accompany Catherine in a triumphant journey through her vast empire, and to visit, with her, that Taurida so famous in fable and in history, which the boldness of a woman had recently snatched from the grasp of the fierce children of Mahomet.

I was about to witness the homage paid to her on her route by a crowd of foreigners, attracted, as men always are, by extensive power and exalted fortune: amongst these, was a king of Poland, once beloved and crowned, but lately deprived of

part of his dominions by this imperious Princess; amongst them too was the heir of the Cæsars, the emperor of the West, who, humbling his diadem, and for a time laying aside the purple, came to mingle with the courtiers of the victorious Empress, in order to draw closer the bonds of an alliance with her, equally formidable to the liberty of Poland, the security of Prussia, and the peace of Europe.

At once a courtier and a negociator, I was instructed to cultivate more and more the favor of Catherine, and to watch at the same time with diligence, the designs and actions of that ambitious Princess, who, covering with numerous troops the banks of the Borysthenes, and the shores of the Black Sea, seemed in concert with her ally, Joseph II, to threaten the approaching and total destruction of the Ottoman empire.

To fulfil this curious and singular mission, I set out without legation, clerks, or secretary. I was about to find myself in the midst of an uninterrupted succession of hunting parties, fêtes, public audiences, assemblies and amusements, without being able to enjoy either liberty for observation, or a moment of solitude to indulge in my own reflections upon what might strike me as worthy of attention.

Nothing less resembles ordinary travelling, than the journeys of a court. Travelling alone, one sees men, countries, customs, establishments such as they really are; but in accompanying a monarch, the traveller finds every thing prepared, disguised,

coloured for the purposes of display; and in the words and actions of men under such circumstances he scarcely discovers more sincerity than in manifestoes of politicians.

In vain is it announced that all etiquette will be banished from these majestic parties of pleasure; restraint is always felt, where there is so great an inequality; you cannot stop where you choose, attend to what you like, nor penetrate what you are obliged to touch upon.

To the traveller who is at liberty, every thing is an object of amusement, instruction and inquiry; but when we follow in the train of a court, that alone becomes the object of general curiosity; that, and not the country, is the real spectacle; it is not the court which goes to see men and nations; they, on the contrary, follow its progress in crowds, and the perpetual tumult of acclamations, spontaneous or commanded, leaves little room for the pleasures of conversation or reflection.

In this journey therefore of 800 leagues, I no more expected to see men and places in their natural state, than an inhabitant of one of our cities could expect to learn the manners of villagers by only seeing them represented at the opera.

Illusion, however, is almost always more attractive than reality, and certainly, the enchanting picture which was presented to the view of Catherine at every step, and which I am about to attempt to sketch, will be to many minds more cu-

rious from its novelty, than the more useful information, communicated by the learned men who have traversed and made philosophical observations on that vast territory of Russia, which has so recently emerged from darkness and become at once so powerful and so colossal on its very first advance towards civilization.

A month before our departure for the Crimea, I had seen, to my great regret, the Prince de Ligne separate from us to carry to the Emperor Joseph II the itinerary of the Empress. He did not rejoin us till we arrived at Kioff, bringing with him his usual companions, that open and spirited gaiety, that noble and natural grace, that obliging gentleness of temper which belongs only to men of intellect and good disposition, and that fruitful variety of imagination which never permits conversation to languish, and which, even in a court, in spite of etiquette, leaves not the least room for *ennui*.

On the 17th of January 1787, Mr. Fitz-Herbert, Count Cobentzel, and I, after having dined at Petersburgh with the Emperor's Consul, set out for Czarskozelo, where we found the Empress silent and thoughtful, contrary to her usual custom.

She was vexed at not being able to take with her the Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine; besides, her favorite Aide-de-Camp, the Count de Momonoff, had a slight fever, and Catherine experienced what happens to all persons too con-

stantly favored by fortune. To such persons the slightest disappointments cause vexation and even surprise.

She received us well, but spoke little, and made us play with her at loto; a game which I believe she seldom played. Her Majesty quickly perceived the *ennui* I felt during this insipid pastime; I was going to sleep in spite of myself; she joked me upon this, and in order to get out of the scrape, I repeated to her the following verses, which I had composed at Paris for the lady of the Maréchal de Luxembourg, a woman celebrated for her talents, who evinced a singular passion for that dull amusement

Le loto, quoi que l'on en dise,
Sera fort long-temps en crédit;
C'est l'excuse de la bêtise,
Et le repos des gens d'esprit.

Ce jeu vraiment philosophique
Met tout le monde de niveau;
L'amour-propre si despotique,
Dépose son sceptre au loto.

Esprit, bon goût, grâce et saillie,
Seront nuls tant qu'on y jouera.
Luxembourg, quelle modestie!
Quoi! vous jouez à ce jeu-là?

Loto whatever may be said
Will ever be a favorite;
It will excuse the thickest head
And give repose to thought and wit.

This truly philosophic game
  Puts all the world on equal terms;
The vainest coxcomb it will tame,
  And make self-love lay down its arms.

Talent, taste and repartee,
  Those who play loto cease to court.
Ah! Luxembourg, what modesty!
  For you to join in such a sport.

The party lasted a short time only; at eight o'clock we were dismissed. We assembled again in the apartment of the Count de Cobentzel, and there we were not more gay. The grand journey, the announcement and expectation of which had so strongly excited our curiosity, seemed to weigh heavily upon us at the moment when we were about to undertake it; it was as if there had been a presentiment of the long-continued commotions and terrible revolutions which speedily followed it.

None of us, however, foresaw that this triumphal march of the Cleopatra of the North would be nearly the epoch of as great a change as had been the voyage of the Cleopatra of Egypt, which was followed by the fall of the Roman republic, the birth of the empire, a civil war which shook the world, and the establishment of a long and cruel tyranny.

At these two distant epochs the catastrophes were alike, although the causes were very different, and human blood equally inundated the earth, during the first for the enslavement of

nations, and during the second for their emancipation.

This tremendous future, however, was still hidden from us by a thick veil, and our momentary sadness was to be explained by motives very natural, very common, and totally unconnected with prophetic anticipations.

Fitz-Herbert, whose melancholy and independent character was annoyed by the restraints of the court, unwillingly quitted Petersburgh, and separated with regret from a Russian lady whom he tenderly loved, as well as from his intimate friend Mr. Ellis, one of the most amiable of Englishmen.

For my part, I was very much occupied by some letters which had recently reached me from France: the mist which the visionary schemes of M. de Calonne had raised began to clear away; every thing in France announced a great crisis, which this rash and superficial minister hastened, by the temerity of the measures by which he proposed to retard it.

Besides, on commencing a journey of four hundred leagues to go to the Crimea, and four hundred other leagues to return to Petersburgh, almost all correspondance was at an end for me, and I could receive but seldom, and at long intervals, news of my wife, my children, my father, my government and all the objects of my affections; in short, the miseries of absence were thus redoubled.

The Count de Cobentzel was the only one of us three who preserved an unchangeable gaiety; the court seemed to be his element, and all its restraints seemed so many attractions for him.

We were young, however, and in the spring of life cares leave no more traces on the heart than wrinkles on the brow; our melancholy was only a light cloud, which disappeared like the dreams of the night.

On the 18th of January, 1787, we commenced our journey: the Empress took in her carriage Mademoiselle Protasoff and the Count Momonoff, who never quitted her, the Count Cobentzel, the Grand Equerry Narischkin and the Grand Chamberlain Schouwaloff. In the second carriage were Fitz-Herbert and I, with the Counts Tchernicheff and d'Anhalt.

The cavalcade was composed of fourteen carriages and one hundred and eighty-four sledges, with forty others to be used in case of necessity. Five hundred and sixty horses were ready for us at each post.

The cold rose to seventeen degrees; the road was excellent, and our carriages, mounted on a sort of lofty skates, were drawn along with such rapidity that they seemed to fly through the air.

To protect us from the cold, we were wrapped up in furs of bear-skin, which we wore over pelisses finer and more valuable; we had on our heads caps of sable. With these precautions we did not feel the cold, even when it rose to twenty

or twenty-five degrees. In the houses where we lodged the stoves gave us reason to fear an excess of heat rather than of cold.

At this time of the year, when the days were shortest, the sun did not give us light until very late, and, at the end of six or seven hours, he disappeared, and the darkest night succeeded. But, in the midst of this darkness, we were not left in want of light: at short distances from each other, and on both sides of the road, enormous piles of fir, cypress, birch and pine, had been raised, which were set on fire; so that we posted through a range of fires more brilliant than the rays of daylight: it was thus that the proud Empress of the North, in the midst of the deepest night, willed and commanded that there should be light.

At seventy-two wersts from Petersburgh we stopped to dine at a new and pretty little town, called Rojestwensk. There her Majesty, having entirely recovered her natural gaiety, spoke to me very graciously of the satisfaction she felt at the conclusion of the treaty of commerce, signed a few days before by her ministers and by me.

This narrative would become monotonous if I were to speak particularly of all the towns and places which we passed through, and where we stopped during so long a journey; I will only mention those which may be worthy of attention on account of their size, their antiquity, their wealth or their history.

The first part of this journey, begun in the

middle of a severe winter, need not excite in the reader any apprehension of a tedious detail. One brief description will suffice: we passed through vast plains covered with snow, and forests of fir, of which the branches, hung with icicles, presented sometimes under the rays of the sun, the splendour of chrystal and the diamond.

In this season all Russia differed little from the cold Siberia; every animal remained in its stable, every inhabitant in his dwelling near his fire-side. Rapid sledges alone ploughed these solitary and frozen plains to carry to all the cities, from the East to the West, and from the South to the North, the various productions of industry and agriculture. These innumerable sledges, like fleets of fast sailing vessels, traversed with incredible celerity the immense plains which then presented the appearance of a frozen sea.

It will be easily conceived that a striking contrast to this sea of snow was presented by the road blazing with a thousand fires through which the numerous cavalcade of the illustrious Sovereign of the North passed majestically with all the pomp of a magnificent court.

At a short distance from the towns and villages, this solitary road became crowded with innumerable citizens and villagers, whose curiosity braved the severity of the cold, and who saluted their Sovereign with the loudest acclamations.

The regular system of passing her days, to which the Empress had accustomed herself, varied

as little as possible when she was travelling. At six o'clock she got up and transacted business with her ministers, and she then breakfasted and received us. We set out at nine o'clock and stopped to dinner at two. We then got again into our carriages and stopped at seven.

Every where she found a palace or an elegant house prepared to receive her. We dined with her every day. After a few moments at her toilette, her Majesty met us again in the drawing-room, chatted and played with us, and at nine o'clock retired, to employ herself until eleven.

In all the towns we had commodious lodgings assigned us in the houses of the rich inhabitants, but in the villages I was obliged to stop at those of the peasants; in which the heat, from their closeness and narrowness, was so excessive that it was impossible to sleep. A little window admitted a feeble light during the day-time into a low room which was almost filled by an enormous stove surrounded by benches placed near the walls; it was on this stove that the peasant and his wife and children slept, deprived of air, and having no light but that which was furnished by a blazing log of wood.

On the second day of our journey I was placed with Mr. Fitz-Herbert in the carriage of the Empress. The conversation was lively, gay and varied, and did not flag for a moment. Her Majesty told us, that on learning that she was blamed for having permitted a captain of a ship to marry a negro woman, she replied, "You see

" that it is the effect of my ambitious views with " regard to the Turks; I have caused a cele- " bration of the marriage of the Russian marine " with the Black Sea."

She delighted in often speaking of the barbarism, the effeminacy and the ignorance of the Musulmans, and of the stupid life of their sultans, whose horizon did not extend beyond the walls of their Harem. "These imbecile despots," said she, " weakened by the pleasures of the seraglio, " ruled over by their ulemas, and captives of their " janissaries, can neither think, speak, fight nor " administer public affairs; their infancy is per- " petual."

She said that the eunuchs, who constantly watch during the night near the grand seignor, carry their vigilant, servile and absurd attention so far as to awake him when they perceive that he has a bad dream; a less dangerous, but quite as sagacious a mark of kindness, as that of the bear so pleasantly related by La Fontaine.

The conversation having some moments afterwards turned upon the extent of the empire, on the variety of people who inhabited it, and on the numerous obstacles which Peter the Great and his successors must have met with in their effects to civilize so many men of different manners, Catherine related to us, in detail, a journey which she once made along the banks of the Wolga.

" There reigns," said she, " such an abundance " in those regions that the progress of industry " must necessarily be very slow, for the stimulus

" of want is seldom felt there, and by that " stimulus alone can people be induced to work. " Even if the people living near this great river " were to neglect their fertile meadows and " numerous flocks, the fisheries alone would pre- " vent their perishing from hunger; I have seen " a hundred and twenty persons fed with fish " which cost no more than thirty five sous."

All this might be very true, but the real cause of the slow progress of civilization is the slavery of the people. The serf, whom no pride sustains, nor self-love excites, sunk almost to the rank of a brute, knows none but physical and limited desires; he does not raise his wishes above what is strictly necessary to pay his master the tribute that he demands.

The country which we traversed at the commencement of our journey, offered little variety of aspect to our attention. There was nothing but forests and frozen marshes. The government of Petersburgh alone contained seventy two thousand acres of wood; but the consumption, which the climate rendered necessary, was so great, that a diminution of these woods began to be perceived and the Empress had forbidden, by an ukase, the cutting down of more than a thirtieth part annually.

Besides political subjects, all the topics which serve to give life to conversation, were successively touched upon and talked of by the Empress naturally sensibly and cheerfully, so that the day appeared very short, and without having observed the progress we were making, we arrived at

Porkhoff, a remarkable town, where Prince Repnin, governor of the province, did the honours of our reception with abundant pompousness and vanity.

This prince, who had acquired some reputation in the war, had made himself hated in Poland by a haughtiness equally insulting to the Poles and to their King. One anecdote will sufficiently show his insolence: one day, at Warsaw, King Stanislas was present at a theatrical performance; the first act was over when the Russian minister arrived at his box. Offended, because he had not been waited for, he caused the curtain to drop and the piece to be begun again.

In consequence of such insults a profound hatred against Russia had become rooted in the minds of the Poles. A proud people may bear to be conquered, but never to be taunted with their humiliation. Force may vanquish, but mildness, justice and generosity can alone produce complete submission.

The Russians were so accustomed to this insulting and humiliating deportment in Poland, that M. de Stackelberg, who was, however, much more affable and less haughty than Prince Repnin, lived more in the style of a king than in that of an ambassador. It was related to me, that the Baron de Thugut, travelling in Poland and wishing to pay his respects to King Stanislas, saw, when he entered the audience chamber, a man richly dressed surrounded by the personages of the court. He advanced towards him making the three usual bows. His mistake

having been immediately remarked, the King was pointed out to him conversing familiarly in the corner of the room with two or three persons. M. de Thugut, rather piqued at the repeated pleasantries which his mistake gave rise to, took his revenge whimsically enough. Being admitted in the evening to play at cards with the Monarch and the ambassador, he pretended to make a mistake, and twice threw down a knave instead of a king. His partner complaining of this: "I beg your pardon," exclaimed he, "I "don't know what has come to me to-day; "this is the third time that I have mistaken a "knave for a king."

Porkhoff is an ancient town situated on the Schelonia; at the beginning of the fourteenth century it was ransomed by the Lithuanians. In the fifteenth, the Novogorodians had surrounded it with strong walls; and they constructed a citadel for its defence. The Swedes got possession of it in 1606, and soon afterwards gave it up to the Russians. This town contained nearly six thousand inhabitants and four hundred merchants, who sent flax and corn to Petersburgh by the Schelonia and the Ilmen.

As I am not going to give here a tedious lecture on geography, I shall proceed at once to Smolensko, not having the presumption to suppose that the reader would wish to follow me through the towns and villages where we stopped twice a day, and which became, to their great surprise, the temporary residences of a magnificent court.

Their poor and rustic inhabitants assembled in crowds, in spite of the severity of the cold, waited patiently with their beards stiffened with icicles round a little palace, raised as if by enchantment in the midst of their dwellings, and in which the joyous court of the Empress, seated at a sumptuous table on the cushions of large and commodious sofas, felt neither the severity of the climate nor the poverty of the country; finding everywhere a pleasant warmth, exquisite wines, rare fruits and delicate dishes; and, though last not least, escaping from *ennui*, the child of uniformity, by means of the varied pleasures which can be communicated to a numerous circle by an agreeable woman, even when she happens to be a queen and a despot.

I think it will not be altogether useless to mention here a fact, in itself of no great moment, but which may contribute to give a just view of the character of Catherine. One day, as I was sitting opposite to her in her carriage, she expressed a desire that I would repeat to her some light pieces of poetry which I had composed.

The delightful familiarity which she permitted to those who travelled with her, the presence of her young favorite, the remembrance of those who had preceded him in her favor, her philosophy, her gaiety, her correspondence with the Prince de Ligne, Voltaire and Diderot, having led me to suppose that she would not be shocked at a tale of gallantry, I recited one to her which was in truth a little free and gay, but still sufficiently

choice in its expressions to have been well received at Paris by the Duc de Nivernais, by the Prince de Beauveau, and by ladies whose virtue equalled their good humour.

To my great surprise, I saw the laughing traveller suddenly assume the deportment of a majestic Sovereign. She interrupted me by a question altogether foreign to the purpose, and changed the subject of conversation.

Some minutes afterwards, in order to show her that I understood her lesson, I entreated her attention to a piece of verse of a very different kind from the former, and to which she lent the most obliging attention: as if desirous that her weaknesses should be respected, she took care to cover them with a veil of decency and dignity.

This anecdote reminds me of what my brother said, with so much justness and originality, when speaking of the indulgence permitted by women thoroughly virtuous, and the apparent severity of those who are not quite so perfect. " Where " virtue reigns," said he, " the shew of nice de- " corum is useless."

We amused ourselves sometimes, in the evening, by playing *au secrétaire*, by making enigmas, charades and bouts-rimés. One day Mr. Fitz-Herbert proposed these to me: *amour*, *frotte*, *tambour*, *note*. I filled them up thus:

De vingt peuples nombreux Catherine est l'*amour*:
Craignez de l'attaquer; malheur à qui s'y *frotte*!
La renommée est son *tambour*,
Et l'histoire son garde-*note*.

This trifle met with great success, and perhaps received more praise than a fine ode would have attracted; at court and on a journey this is not extraordinary.

Acquired glory and constant good fortune ought to render us insensible to the shafts of envy and the sarcasms which the malignity of little minds is perpetually casting forth against greatness and renown. The Empress, however, on this point resembled Voltaire; the most trifling attack wounded her vanity: as she had good sense she affected to laugh; but it was easy to discover that her mirth was not perfectly unaffected.

She knew that at that time many people, especially in France and at Paris, still looked upon Russia as an Asiatic country, poor, plunged in ignorance, darkness and barbarity; that they affected to confound the new and European Russia with the Asiatic and savage Muscovy.

The work of the Abbé Chappe, which she believed to have been composed by the direction of the Duc de Choiseul, still weighed upon her mind, and her self-love was incessantly tormented by the bitterness of Frederick the Second, who delighted in speaking with cutting irony of the finances of Catherine, of her government, of the undisciplined state of her troops, of the slavery of her people, and of the want of solidity in her power.

This Princess, therefore, in making allusions to these satirical attacks, very often spoke to us of her vast empire by the designation only of *her*

little household: "What," she would ask, "do you "think of *my little household?* Is it not, in truth, "becoming furnished and enriched by degrees? I "have not much money, but it appears to me "that what I have is well employed."

At other times addressing herself to me: "I'll "bet a wager, Monsieur le Comte, that at this "moment your fine ladies, your fashionables and "your literati at Paris, pity you greatly for "having to travel in this country of bears, amidst "barbarians, and with a tiresome Czarina. I "respect your learned men, but I love the "uncultivated better; for my own part, I only "wish to know what is necessary for the ma-"nagement of *my little household.*"

"Your Majesty amuses yourself at our ex-"pence," I replied, "you will know that no "person in France thinks of you in that manner. "Voltaire is a sufficiently brilliant and clear inter-"preter to your Majesty, of our opinions and "of our sentiments. You should rather be some-"times discontented with the species of fear and "jealousy which the prodigious increase of *your* "*little household* gives to the greatest powers."

"Yes," said she, sometimes laughing, "you "are not willing that I should drive from my "neighbourhood your children the Turks: you "have in them, truly, delicate scholars; they are "disciples who do you honour. If you had si-"milar neighbours in Piedmont or in Spain, who "brought you annually plague and famine, and

" killed or destroyed every year twenty thousand " people, would you find it agreeable that I " should take them under my protection? I be- " lieve that then you would indeed treat me as a " barbarian."

I had sufficient difficulty in replying upon this point, and extricated myself in the best way I could by common-places about the maintenance of peace and the conservation of the equilibrium of Europe.

Besides, as these were irregular or occasional conversations and pleasantries, and not political conferences, my embarrassment was not of long duration, and some lively sallies sufficed to deliver me from the disagreeable task of covering, with fine phrases, an indelible disgrace; for, in my opinion, it was a disgrace to the great powers of Europe to have been induced by a blind and fallacious policy to become the friends and almost the tributaries of those ferocious and brutal Moors, Tunisians, Algerines, Arabs and Turks, who have been by turns the opprobrium and terror of the civilised world.

Previously to our arrival at Smolensko, our days were thus distributed; the first at Selogoronetz, the second at Porkhoff, the third at Bejanitsi, the fourth at Veliki-Louki, and the fifth at Velije. On the sixth we were at Smolensko. Independently of a great number of villages in this distance of one hundred and seventy-two leagues, we passed through but a few towns,

Sophia, Rojestwensk, Louga, Porkhoff, Veliki-Louki and Velije.

The most remarkable were Porkhoff, of which I have just spoken; Veliki-Louki, the name of which signifies *great arch* or *bow*, and was given to it in consequence of the sinuosity of the river Lova, that flows near its walls. Its history is known since the twelfth century: devastated by turns by the Novogorodians, and by the Russian princes who so long abandoned themselves to sanguinary warfare, burned by them and ravaged by the Lithuanians, it fell in the sixteenth century under the yoke of the ferocious Czar Ivan Vasiliewitz.

Conquered afterwards by the King of Poland, Battori, it was not restored to Russia until 1582. At a later period the treacherous Demetrius gave it to the flames; it remained deserted for nine years, and was re-peopled by the Cossacks of the Jaick and of the Don, in the reign of the Czar Michael Feodorowitz. It is fortified; the river Lova runs through it; it contains three churches; it is enriched by a trade in leather, and has twenty-seven tanneries.

Velije contains six hundred houses and five thousand inhabitants: for a long time a part of the Polish dominions, it was made part of the empire at the same time as White-Russia. Its territory is fertile in hemp, in flax and in corn. A great commerce is carried on with Riga by means of the Dwina. I saw there four Greek churches, one catholic and four others, consecrated to the worship of different sects.

Lastly, with respect to Poretchié, which was elevated to the rank of a city only in 1775. In the course of a few years it had increased so greatly in prosperity, that it contained, at the period of our visiting it, five hundred houses and upwards of three thousand inhabitants. The river Casplia, which runs beneath its walls, falls into the Dwina. This communication with Riga must enrich it rapidly.

The name of Smolensko is imprinted on the memory of France by glorious victories and by great misfortunes. The flames to which its conquered inhabitants delivered it, illuminated the triumph of the most celebrated warrior of modern times, and, on his return, the ashes of this ruined city were the ominous monument, which marked the epoch of the destruction of his armies and of the overthrow of the empire founded by that extraordinary man, whose brief and heroic life retraced, in a single picture, and in a few years, the triumphs of the Roman consuls, the glory of the legislators of antiquity, the conquests of Alexander, of Cæsar, of Trajan and of Charlemagne, the disasters of Cambyses, the reverses of Charles the Twelfth, and the grievous end of Prometheus.

Smolensko, a capital of a government, is not inferior in antiquity to any city in Russia: like Novogorod, it was in a flourishing condition, previously to the arrival of Rurik.

In 862, Askold found it wealthy and extremely populous; for a long while independent of Kioff and of Novogorod, it was subjected to the latter

city by Oleg, and was afterwards united to the Grand Duchy of Kioff, when the Grand Dukes made the latter city the seat of their throne and power.

In 996, the great Wladimir gave it to his son, and from that time it had its own princes. In the twelfth century, it was raised into a Bishoprick. After having been long exposed to civil wars, it was besieged in 1339 by the Tartars in concert with the Grand Duke of Moscow; they were unable to reduce it, but they devastated its territory.

A few years afterwards, the plague depopulated it altogether, and it became the prey of many princes and Grand Dukes, who captured it by turns.

Some Lithuanians conquered Smolensko, in the sixteenth century, at the end of which they fortified it. In the seventeenth century the King of Poland, Sigismund, triumphed over it, but it was retaken by the Czar Alexis Michaelowitz and reunited for ever to Russia.

Smolensko, is situated on a declivity, on the left shore of the Dnieper or Borysthenes, and divided into two parts; it is encompassed by a strong wall, and defended by a citadel. Its walls are almost two leagues in circumference.

The buildings occupied by the Judges, the Archbishop, and the Governor, are sufficiently handsome; there is a convent for men, and there are two nunneries; seven churches built of stone, five of wood, and a very beautiful cathedral.

I was informed that the population amounted to twelve thousand souls. Without the city, there are fine suburbs containing more than six hundred houses. The commerce of Smolensko with Riga and with Poland, at the period when I visited it, was in a state of great activity, which must have been greatly promoted by the progress made in the cultivation and civilization of the southern provinces of the empire.

Smolensko lies at a distance of six hundred and eighty-nine wersts from Petersburgh, and three hundred and fifty from Moscow, (four wersts are nearly one league). The two divisions of this great city communicate with each other by a floating bridge.

The government of Smolensko is reckoned among the richest of the empire. Its wealth, drawn from agriculture, is less subject than any other to those vicissitudes to which the wealth of industry is exposed in despotic empires.

The fruits and the corn of all kinds which this country produces, cannot want a market, because Smolensko is the central point of the communication established between the Black Sea and the Baltic.

There is a numerous nobility residing in Smolensko, and they fill the principal offices in the administration. The part of the community which is neither ennobled nor enslaved, is mercantile. Under the reign of Catherine, the limits of servitude were gradually contracted, and those of liberty were progressively extended.

The appearance of this city is extremely picturesque: the beauty of the Dnieper, the rapidity of its waters, which give indications almost from their very source, of the majesty which they display at Kioff, and which increases until they mingle with the Black Sea, the steepness of its shores, the vessels which adorn it, the varying ravines which nature has distributed over the sides of the mountain, the houses, the gardens, the orchards with which they are beautified, present a most singular view to the traveller, who, passing over the noble arches of its bridges, beholds beneath him, at the bottom of an abyss, this picturesque city, looking like the work of an ingenious painter.

The snow which still lay upon the ground, did not permit us to observe this striking picture, except through a sort of veil; however, notwithstanding this dull and uniform covering, it was impossible not to be struck with the change which had taken place in the appearance of the soil, from the time when we left the government of Petersburgh, and more especially after we had arrived at a ridge of heights which commences beyond Porkhoff. It is in the midst of this elevation that the Dwina, the Wolga, and the Borysthenes have their source, the one emptying its waters into the North Sea, and the others discharging themselves into the Caspian and the Black Seas.

Nevertheless, these heights being arrived at on all sides, by a long and scarcely perceptible acclivity, they appear to the eye mere hills, although

they form, perhaps, one of the most elevated points of Europe.

Having travelled nearly two hundred leagues in six days, the Empress became fatigued. Still it would have been difficult to have journeyed in so severe a season with greater expedition, or to have enjoyed greater comforts, magnificence and amusements than we did: the cold was provided against by a multitude of precautions; the distance was apparently abridged by the rapidity of the sledges, and the tediousness of the nights was dissipated by the immense piles of wood which were burning at every thirty toises.

But as it was necessary to hold a court throughout, to appear in state, to examine the establishments, to grant audiences, to receive complaints and remedy abuses, and to give useful lessons and encouraging rewards, but few moments remained for relaxation.

Even in her carriage, the Empress who laid aside her state, only that she might endeavor to please, was continually dispensing kindness, wit and gaiety, an employment the most amiable, but one which could not be sustained for a long while without some fatigue.

Catherine therefore resolved to remain three days at Smolensko, and this retarded our arrival at Kioff, where a crowd of travellers, from all parts of Europe, had assembled.

Her Majesty, after having performed her religious duties in the cathedral, secluded herself in the palace. On the following day she received

the nobility, the authorities, the corporation, and the clergy; and, in the evening, gave a grand ball, at which three hundred ladies, splendidly attired, gave ample evidence of the progress, which the provinces of the empire had already made in imitating the luxuries, the fashions and the elegance which excite admiration in the most brilliant courts of Europe. The outward appearance of all, presented a picture of civilization; but the colouring was thin, and the attentive observer easily detected the characteristic features of ancient Muscovy.

The Archbishop of Mohiloff attended the court of the Empress. I was surprised at his manner, which was more warlike than ecclesiastic. "Do "not be astonished," said Catherine, "he was, "for a considerable time, a captain of dragoons, "and in that quality I would advise you to make "your confession to him."

The good prelate proved to us that he still retained something of his former profession, for he accompanied us on horseback as far as Kioff, galloping at the rate of thirty-nine leagues a day, without complaining either of the fatigue or of the ice.

I saw with pleasure the end of the three days, which her Majesty was pleased to designate, as those of repose; but which being wholly employed, without the slightest cessation, in granting audiences and in displays of state, appeared to me more fatiguing, than those spent in travelling.

Is it not far better in fact to be drawn rapidly over the ice in a large and easy carriage, being well seated, comfortably clothed, and with an agreeable society, at once instructive and amusing, than to have to stand erect, and in a court dress during the whole of the morning and a part of the afternoon, in the midst of vast saloons, to receive corporations, to hear long and sycophantic addresses, and, what is worse, to attend in a Greek church during the monotonous melody of the insipid chaunt ?

It should be remarked, that in these churches, no low and short masses are used, and that all sitting down is prohibited; to do so, indeed, would be impossible, for there are neither benches nor chairs. It must be acknowledged, that the Romans consult their ease a little more than the Greeks, in their mode of pursuing the path to salvation. The service, according to the ritual of the Greek church, is much longer than ours; and we keep Lent but once, while they observe it four times a year.

We resumed our journey, and after ten days' travelling, arrived on the 9th of February 1787, at Kioff, the ancient capital of the first czars of Russia. This city is situated on the Borysthenes, at nearly four hundred leagues from Petersburgh. This was the end of the first part of our journey; it was decided that we should remain here until the breaking up of the frost had opened the navigation of the river, and that was not likely to take place before the end of April.

From Smolensko to Kioff, notwithstanding the uniformity of aspect which a thick snow gave to the country, it was evident that the villages became more numerous and more thickly inhabited, in proportion as we approached towards the south. Before our arrival at Kioff we passed through ten towns: Mscislaff, Tscherikoff, Novomest, Starodoub, Novogorod-Severski, Soznitsa, Betzna, Tschernigoff, Pejin, Kozelits.

We saw at Mscislaff two catholic convents and a large school of Jesuits. That order, exiled from all the other kingdoms of Europe, had preserved an asylum in Russia; there danger was not apprehended from the intrigues of these monks, because they were not permitted to leave the two or three towns which had been assigned to them as places of residence.

Besides, how could it be expected that they should be able to extend their political and religious influence in a country in which the sovereign, the court, the nobility and the people were so strongly attached to a church which had been for centuries separated from the Roman faith?

But, after the death of Catherine, her prudent foresight was no longer imitated. The Jesuits, through pliancy and intrigue, gradually obtained permission to settle in the interior of the empire, and to establish themselves even at Petersburgh and at Moscow, and, as nothing could arrest the ambition of this turbulent band, so fatal to all the governments which had given it protec-

tion, it found means, by secret plots and mysterious proselitism, to sow disunion in many families, and to cause the government well-grounded uneasiness. At length, the patience of the Emperor Alexander was exhausted, and that monarch, a few years previously to his death, expelled this pernicious and incorrigible fraternity from his dominions.

This history of Mscislaff, like that of all the other cities which we had passed through, presents only an uninterrupted succession of calamities, caused by the contests of the Lithuanians, the Tartars, the Poles and the Russian princes, by whom it was at different times conquered, lost and ravaged.

In the eighteenth century the territory of Mscislaff became the theatre of a war between the Russians and the Swedes; and afterwards, in 1772, fell with White Russia under the dominion of the Russians.

We saw at Kritscheff another school of the Jesuits. In 1708, near this town, Charles the Twelfth crossed the river Sofa, on his way to Pultawa, where fortune, till then always favorable, was about so cruelly to destroy his hopes, to overthrow his power and to eclipse his glory.

At Tscherikoff the Empress permitted the Jews to have a school and a synagogue.

Novogorod-Severski, built by the Grand-Duke Jaroslaff, in the eleventh century, is situated on the Desna. It was called Severski, that is *north*,

because the Sarmatians, a northern people, took up their residence in its neighbourhood, on the banks of the Desna. It is rich, populous and commercial.

The Empress, far from confining herself to common-place expressions, every where carefully interrogated the bishops, the landed proprietors and the people in trade, respecting their situation, their wishes and their wants. It was thus that she rendered herself an object of attachment, and made an opening for truth to reach her and expose the enormous abuses which so many persons were interested in concealing from her.

" More is to be learned," she said to me one day, " by speaking to ignorant persons about " their own affairs, than by talking with the " learned, who have nothing but theories, and " who would be ashamed not to answer you by " ridiculous observations on subjects of which " they have no positive knowledge. How I pity " these poor *savans!* They never dare to pro- " nounce these four words, *I do not know*, which " we ignorant people find so convenient, and " which often prevent us from adopting dange- " rous decisions; for, in a doubtful case, it is " much better to do nothing than to do wrong."

This conversation led to a very curious anecdote of M. Mercier de La Rivière, a writer of distinguished talent. M. de La Rivière, formerly intendant of Martinique, had published at Paris a work, which is still esteemed, entitled; *On the natural and essential order of political society*. This

work obtained a brilliant success in consequence of its conformity with the principles of the economists, who were then much in vogue.

As Catherine the Second wished to know their system, she invited the author to visit Russia, promising him a fair recompense for his pains. It was just at the time when the Empress was about to make her solemn entry into Moscow; and she desired him to await her arrival in that capital.

" M. de La Rivière," said the Empress to me, " commenced his journey with promptitude; " and, as soon he had arrived, his first care was " to engage three adjoining houses, the whole " of the arrangements of which he speedily al- " tered, converting the saloons into halls of au- " dience and the rooms into offices.

" The philosopher had taken it into his head " that I had sent for him to assist me in govern- " ing the empire, and to rescue us from the " darkness of barbarism by his enlightened in- " struction. Upon the doors of the numerous " apartments he had written in large characters: " *department of the interior, department of com-* " *merce, department of justice, department of finance,* " *tax-office, &c.* At the same time, also, he in- " vited many of the inhabitants, both natives " and strangers, who had been represented to " him as intelligent persons, to lay before him " their pretensions, in order that he might judge " of their capabilities for office.

" All this made a great noise in Moscow, and,

" as it was known that it was by my orders he " had been sent for, he had no difficulty in find- " ing a number of credulous people who were " eager to pay their court to him.

" While these things were going on I arrived, " and the comedy came to a close. I aroused " this legislator from his dreams; I conversed " with him two or three times respecting his " work, upon which I confess that he spoke " extremely well, for he was not deficient in abi- " lity; vanity alone had for a moment disturbed " his brain. I indemnified him properly for his " expences, and we parted good friends. He " forgot the cares of the prime minister, and " returned to his country satisfied as an author, " but a little ashamed, as a philosopher, at the " false step which his pride had caused him to " to commit."

It was in allusion to this anecdote that the Empress wrote thus to Voltaire: " M. de La Ri- " vière has arrived here to teach us the art of " legislation. He imagined that we walked upon " all-fours, and has very politely taken the trou- " ble to come from Martinique to set us upon " our hinder feet."

It was the celebrated Diderot who inspired this Princess with a desire of knowing M. de La Rivière. Diderot was himself at Petersburgh, and he pleased Catherine greatly by the brilliancy of his wit, by the originality of his genius and of his style, and by his vehement and flowing eloquence.

This philosopher, who perhaps, however, does not merit so noble a name, since he was intolerant in his incredulity and almost absurdly fanatical in favor of the doctrine of annihilation, ought, with his fiery spirit, to have been even less disposed than other men to believe that the soul of man is merely material.

Besides, his reputation seems to have outlived the greater part of his writings. They are more praised than read. He spoke better than he wrote: labour checked his imagination, and his writings rank far below those of our great authors; but in conversation he was gifted with a fervor which carried all before it. The power of his expressions, which he found without seeking for them, gave the hearer no opportunity to appreciate the justness or to detect the fallacy of his thoughts; they appeared great, because they were singular and clothed with images. He was the genius of paradox and the prophet of materialism.

" I frequently had long conversations with " him," said Catherine, " but with more curio- " sity than profit. Had I placed faith in him, " every institution in my empire would have " been overturned; legislation, administration, " politics and finances, would all have been " changed for the purpose of substituting some " impracticable theories.

" However, as I listened more than I talked, " any one, on being present, would have sup- " posed him to be the commanding pedagogue

" and myself the humble scholar. Probably he " was of that opinion himself, for, after some " time, finding that he had not wrought in my " government any of those great innovations " which he had advised, he exhibited his sur- " prise by a sort of haughty discontent.

" Then speaking to him freely, I said: " *Mon-* " *sieur Diderot, I have listened with the greatest* " *pleasure to all that your brilliant genius has* " *inspired you with; but all your grand principles,* " *which I understand very well, though they will* " *make fine books, would make sad work in actual* " *practice. You forget, in all your plans for re-* " *formation, the difference between our two positions:* " *you work only upon paper, which submits to every* " *thing; it is altogether obedient and supple, and op-* " *poses no obstacles, either to your imagination or* " *to your pen; whereas I, a poor Empress, I work* " *upon human nature, which is, on the contrary,* " *irritable and easily offended.*

" I am satisfied that, from that time, he pitied " me, and looked on me as one possessed only of " a narrow and ordinary mind. From that moment " he spoke to me only on literary subjects, and " politics disappeared from our conversations."

Notwithstanding this bad success, however, the author of *The Father of a Family, The Life of Seneca,* and one of the originators of a great work, *The Encyclopedia,* had more reason to give praise to Russia than to France; for, in his own country, he was thrown into prison, while the Empress purchased his library at fifty thousand

francs and left it in his hands, and procured a house for him at Paris.

I do not think it will be inappropriate to give here, in support of this anecdote, extracts from two letters from Catherine to Voltaire, and also from his reply.

" Monsieur, my mind is as barren as my name " is inharmonious. I must reply to your excel- " lent verses by bad prose; I myself have never " composed any, but that circumstance does not " make me admire yours the less. They have " so entirely spoiled me that I can scarcely en- " dure any others. I shut myself up in my great " hive: one cannot follow different employments " at the same time.

" Never did I imagine that the purchase of a " library would have acquired for me so many " compliments as I receive from all the world " respecting that of M. Diderot. But confess, " you to whom humanity is so much indebted for " the support you have given to innocence and " to virtue in the persons of the Calas, that it " would have been cruel and unjust to separate " a scholar from his books."

ANOTHER LETTER FROM CATHERINE.

" The splendor of the north star is but an Au- " rora Borealis. The kindnesses diffused at some " hundreds of leagues, and of which you are " pleased to make mention, do not belong to me. " The Calas owe that which they have received

" to their friends, and M. Diderot the sale of his " library to his; but the Calas and the Sirven " are indebted to you for all. It is nothing to " give a little to our neighbour when we our- " selves have more than we want; but we im- " mortalize ourselves when we to become the " advocates of human nature, the defenders of " oppressed innocence."

ANSWER OF VOLTAIRE.

" I hope your Imperial Majesty will pardon " me. No, you are not the Aurora Borealis, but " you are, assuredly, the most brilliant star of " the North, and it never before possessed one " so beneficent as yourself. Andromeda, Per- " seus and Calisto are of no worth when com- " pared with you. All those stars would have " left Diderot to perish with hunger. He had " been persecuted in his own country, and your " benevolent beams reached him even there."

All the sovereigns of that time beheld our parliaments arraign and condemn the daring works of the philosophers, and yet they courted the authors of these very books, whom they regarded as the dispensers of renown. Catherine and Frederick, above all others, were insatiable of celebrity, and, like the Gods of Olympus, they loved to be intoxicated with its incense. It was to obtain it that they were so lavish of themselves to Voltaire, to Rousseau, to Raynal, to D'Alembert and to Diderot.

It is in vain to strive; men live in the atmosphere of their age, they are hurried on by its whirlwind, and those are often most afflicted by its progress, who were the first to accelerate it.

All the nobility followed their example, and it was not till after they had thus consolidated the foundation of the edifice of a new social order, that they conceived the chimerical project of overturning it, forgetting that the human mind, like time, always marches onwards, and never recedes.

The present may be directed, the future embellished, all nature may be modified, except the past, which can never re-exist; it is to us the real nothing, a shadow which has no existence, but in our remembrance.

The very reasonable fear which Catherine the Second evinced, of every thing which could draw her into the perilous gulf of innovation, recalls to my mind the anger she expressed to me against an unfortunate physician of her empire, M. Samoïloff, who advised her, she told me, to treat the plague like the small-pox, and to inoculate for it, in the hope of gradually destroying it. He had made a trial upon himself, and having done so several times, he requested permission to make his dangerous practice general; but the worthy docter, instead of a pension and a patent for his invention, received only such a reprimand, as his well meant absurdity deserved.

It was the Marshal Romanzoff, the governor of the province, who received the Empress at its boundary. That old and celebrated warrior,

carried upon his brow the stamp of his character: there was that mingled expression of modesty and high-mindedness, which always indicates true merit; but there might also be perceived an expression of bitterness and of discontent, engendered by the many favors and the immense influence enjoyed by Prince Potemkin.

The competition, for command, divided these two generals; it was a constant struggle between glory and favor, and, as it but too often happens, favor was always triumphant.

The Marshal obtained nothing for his government; his undertakings flagged; his troops had nothing but old uniforms, and his officers solicited advancement in vain; all the favors, and all the preferments were showered upon the armies, which were commanded, and upon the provinces, which were governed by the favorite prime minister.

The deluded Empress attributed to the Marshal the sad state in which she found his troops, his works and his administration, while she commended with enthusiasm, the flourishing condition of the governments of the Prince, and the magic rapidity of his creations.

Moreover, Catherine was a queen and a woman: the long established favorite, praised and perpetually thanked her, and the old warrior always complained; she therefore awaited the return of the one with impatience, and did not listen to the other without ill temper.

In approaching Kioff, one feels that sort of re-

spect, which is always inspired by the remains of antiquity. The picturesque situation of that ancient city, adds to the impression. The sight of it revives the recollection, that it was the cradle of an immense empire, for a long period trammelled and bound down, and which, during a single century, has burst forth formidable and colossal.

It was from the walls of Kioff, that the first armies set forth, which shook the throne of the Emperors of the East, and the Princes, who buried their lances in the gilded doors of the city of Constantine. It was to Kioff, that a Greek Princess carried the light of the Gospel, which spread with rapidity, even to the frozen countries of the pole. It will, after all, perhaps, be from Kioff, that those avenging armies will issue, who shall drive the ferocious Musulmans from Europe, and thus reward the efforts of heroic Greece, which has been too long abandoned to the intolerable yoke, and the savage cruelty of her oppressors.

The name of Kioff, according to M. Tatischeff, is derived from the Sarmatian word *kivi*, which signifies *mountain*. It is, in fact, built upon steep heights. According to other authorities, a Sclavonian Prince, Kii, gave it his name. They date its foundation in the year 430. Tributary to the Kozars, it threw off their yoke under the reign of Oskold and of his successor Aleg. After that, it continued under the domination of the Russian Princes.

At the end of the tenth century, its territory was ravaged by the Petschenegues, and a few years

afterwards, an usurper seized it, but he was finally driven out in 1037 by the Grand Duke Jaroslaff-Wladimirowitz, who declared it the capital of the Russian empire.

That empire was a prey to the anarchy, caused by the perpetual disputes of the nobility for a much longer period than the other states of Europe. Numbers of Princes disputed the possession of Kioff, it was pillaged, burned, lost and retaken by turns.

In 1239, the Khan of Tartary, Batti, made himself master of that capital, and the Musulmans retained possession of it during eighty years. It was for a moment retaken by the Lithuanians, but the Khan of the Crimea, Menguirei, took it, demolished its fortifications, and reduced the whole of its inhabitants to slavery.

In the seventeenth century, it fell under the power of Poland. The Czar Alexis Michaelowitz snatched it from the King of Poland, Casimir, and finally, by the treaty of 1686, it was definitively attached to the empire of Russia.

Kioff is situated on the shore of the Dnieper, upon a hill, which rises perpendicularly in some places, to forty toises above the level of the water. This gives it a very imposing aspect, when viewed from the opposite bank, and preserves to it an appearance of its ancient majesty.

One may judge of that ancient splendour, by a description which is given of it by Eggard, an author of the eleventh century: it already con-

tained three hundred churches, three fairs were held in it annually, and its population, according to this writer, Eggard, was innumerable. A hundred years afterwards, a fire devastated it, and destroyed six hundred churches.

At the time when I saw it, it occupied a great space, but presented to the view nothing but a heterogeneous mixture of majestic ruins, and miserable barracks, some immense convents, many churches with gilded belfrys, and a number of palaces or buildings of stone, commenced, but for the most part very far from being finished.

The ground, upon which Kioff is built, is naturally divided into three parts: the first, is composed of the fortress of Petschersky, and its suburbs; the second, contains the ancient city; and the third, the new houses, built in the bottoms, which are near the Borysthenes: by some, the latter part is called Podol, and by others, Lower Kioff. Each of these divisions is encompassed by ramparts, and there is a communication between them.

Petschersky is protected by well constructed works. In this fortress, there is a magnificent convent of monks, which was founded in 1160. Its antiquity, and the mortal remains of many martyrs, which are preserved within its immense catacombs, renders it an object of devotion, and cause it to be visited by numerous pilgrims.

Ancient Kioff is situated on the mountain on the north side, and separated from the fortress, by

a deep moat. There, are seen the cathedral dedicated to St. Sophia, and near to that church, the monastery of St. Michael.

At the foot of the mountain, and on level ground, at the side of the river lies Podol or Lower Kioff. It is inhabited by tradesmen, and enlivened by merchants. Here I remarked the monastery of Bratski, in which there is a school, where the Greek, Latin, French and German languages are taught, and also the elements of the sciences.

The environs of Kioff are strewed with many hermitages and monasteries, which have varied, and pleasant situations: among others, may be distinguished the monastery of Vouidoubets, whose name recalls to memory an ancient tradition. The old chronicles inform us, that Prince Wladimir having been baptized, resolved to destroy the idols and the heathen temples; he therefore commanded that the chief idol, which was named *Péroun*, should be dragged as far as the edge of the Dnieper, and thrown into the river.

The people, bound by their ancient superstition to the worship of this idol, followed with cries and lamentations along the water side, the course, which the current bore it, calling out: *Péroun, Péroun, vouidoubey*, that is to say: *Péroun, Péroun, get out of the water.*

As chance would have it, the idol came to land near the bank, at the place where the monastery is built, of which I have just been speaking, and that circumstance, has ever since rendered the spot sacred in the estimation of the credulous peo-

ple. The monks encouraged this superstition by giving the name of Vouidoubets, to the church and convent, founded upon the shallow, upon which Péroun run-a-shore.

When we had examined this ancient capital, and its environs, the Empress wished to know, what impression their appearance had produced upon M. de Cobentzel, upon M. Fitz-Herbert and upon myself; and she used afterwards frequently to say, laughingly, that the difference of our answers would give a tolerably just idea of the genius of the three nations, as whose representatives we appeared.

" What do you think of the city of Kioff?" said she to the Count de Cobentzel. " Madam," replied the Count, in a tone of enthusiasm, " it is " the most beautiful, the most imposing, and the " most magnificent city, that I ever beheld." Mr. Fitz-Herbert answered to the same question: " It is a dull place, where there is nothing to be " seen but ruins, and shabby houses." Interrogated in my turn, I replied: " Madam, Kioff " presents the remembrance, and the hope of a " great city."

A large and elegant palace had been built for the Empress, and it was richly furnished. In it, she received the homage of the clergy, of the authorities, of the nobility, of the merchants, and of foreigners, a great number of whom had been attracted by the magnificence and the novelty of the spectacle.

In fact, the astonished eye beheld at once a

sumptuous court, a triumphant Empress, a splendid and warlike nobility, stately and ostentatious princes, merchants in their long robes, with large beards; officers of all the armies; the famous cossacks of the Don, richly clothed in the Asiatic style, and, with the length of whose lances, with whose bravery and whose irregularity, Europe has recently become but too well acquainted; Tartars, formerly the rulers of Russia, but now humbly submitting to the yoke of a woman, and of a christian; a Prince of Georgia laying at the foot of the throne of Catherine, tributes from Phasis and from Colchis; many envoys from the numerous tribes of wandering, warlike, Kirghis, often beaten, but never subdued; and finally those savage Kalmoucks, who bear a true resemblance to the Huns, whose ugliness in days of yore, inspired as much terror in Europe, as did the renowned sword of their ferocious monarch Attila.

It was the whole East congregated to see the modern Semiramis, receiving the homage of all the monarchs of the West. It was like a magic theatre, where ancient and modern times seemed to be mingled and confounded with one another, where civilization went hand in hand with barbarism, and the contrast was rendered the more extraordinary by the marked difference and great variety of the manners, figures and costume of the persons who composed the whole.

The Empress, always systematic in her proceedings, gave, as she had done at every other place where she had stopped, a magnificent ball

to the inhabitants of Kioff. I had hoped that, from following in the suite of this Princess during so long a journey, I should have been able to examine in detail, the establishments, and the situations of the different countries through which we should travel. Impatient, and out of temper at being disappointed in my expectation, I happened to say, that it was extremely vexatious to travel so far, and never to see any thing but a court, never to hear any thing but Greek masses, and never to attend at any thing but balls.

Catherine heard of it, and said to me: "I am "informed that you censure me for traversing my "empire, in order to give nothing but audiences "and fêtes; but, listen to my reasons: I do not "travel to see the places, but to see the people. "I know enough by charts and descriptions, with "regard to matter which a rapid progress will not "permit me to investigate. That, which is es- "sential to me, is to give the people the means of "approaching me, to open a way for their com- "plaints, and to make those tremble, who dare to "abuse my authority, in the expectation that I "shall not discover their errors, their negligences, "or their injustice. Such then, is the advantage "which I expect to derive from my journies; "their mere announcement does good; and my "motto is: *The eye of the master fattens the horse.*"

As we had foreseen that we should be compelled to remain in Kioff for one or two months, Cobentzel, Fitz-Herbert and myself, had given directions to our attendants to rejoin us, in order

that we might be able to sustain our characters in a becoming manner, by supporting an establishment, and receiving the distinguished persons at Kioff, both native and foreign. But our precautions and our preparations were useless, and we found ourselves obliged to dismiss our household: the Empress had positively commanded that the burthen of all the arrangements throughout the tour, should be sustained by herself.

On my arrival at a very fine house which was assigned to me, I found it amply stored with provisions of every description. The Empress had provided a steward, valet-de-chambre, cooks, officers, footmen, coachmen, carriages, postillions, a splendid service of silver plate, superb linen, several sets of porcelain, and some exquisite wines; in short, nothing was wanting to sustain the most splendid state. She had directed that we should not pay for any thing. During the whole of this great journey, therefore, we were allowed to be at no other expense, than that of making such presents as it seemed fitting to us to offer to the proprietors of the different houses where we were entertained, and which were of course proportioned to the rank and quality of our hosts.

We acted in conformity with the wishes of Catherine; and, as I had lived in Poland for some days like a Count Palatine, I maintained my own little court at Kioff like a Russian Boyard, or one of the descendants of Rurik and of Wladimir.

The days on which the Empress did not invite us to her table, perhaps about twice a week, we

gave grand dinners ourselves; but, after some time, the inconvenience of being thus separate, induced us to come to a fresh resolution: all three of us agreed to live together, in the house of the Count de Cobentzel, which was immense and very convenient, so that we might invite a great number of guests at one time; this was altogether much more agreeable. The tiresomeness of doing the honors of Kioff to so many strangers, seemed far less burthensome to us when we acted in concert with each other, than it had done, while we were separate. After this arrangement, I never dined at my own house, but when I was indisposed, or had an inclination to entertain a small party of friends.

I beheld the arrival of the Count de Stackelberg from Warsaw, with a lively pleasure mixed with gratitude, and the more so, because he shewed himself delighted with my success, a great portion of which, he might with justice have attributed to himself. But, what a difference did I find in him? he was altogether another person. The stately and sumptuous Viceroy of Poland, became in Russia but a courtier, almost lost among the crowd. It seemed to me, as if I beheld a Prince dethroned.

However, although the Prince Potemkin and the other ministers had succeeded in inducing the Empress to treat him with coldness, he extricated himself with dignity from his dangerous position. From the habit of commanding, he had contracted a gravity of countenance, and a weighti-

ness in his delivery, which seemed indeed strange enough at court, but which strongly indicated a man of power and authority, long accustomed to inspire respect and to command silence.

The Poles arrived in crowds; certainly, more from fear, than from affection for the ruler of the north. Among them, were Counts Branitski, Potocki, Mnicheck, Prince Sapieha, and Princess Lubomirska.

At this period, a report was spread, that ten Russian regiments were about to enter Polish Ukraine immediately, which threw Poland into alarm.

The improprieties recently committed in Russia, by many young Frenchmen, and the fear that their giddiness would counteract the design which I had formed, of forming a friendly connexion between Russia and France, and of destroying the old prejudices against us, rooted in the mind of the Empress, had determined me to intreat M. de Vergennes and my father not to grant permission to the youth of our court to travel in Russia without great care and circumspection.

They understood me, and only two Frenchmen arrived at Kioff; they were both persons of distinction, being the Chevalier Alexander de Lameth, and Count Edward Dillon. M. de la Fayette had also signified his intention of attending the court of Catherine, but, as he was nominated a member of the assembly of Notables, he could not execute his project. The Empress evinced to me a deep regret at the circumstance. She had a great desire to be made acquainted

with him, for, at that time, all the world, even sovereigns themselves, were enthusiastic for the enfranchisement of America.

M. de la Fayette appeared to them a hero, because he had fought for the cause of liberty, only in another hemisphere; but, from the moment when he appeared willing to sustain the same cause in Europe, every sovereign regarded him as guilty of rebellion.

Interest produces a rapid change in opinions. When I was in Prussia, the ocean still separated the new divinity (Liberty) from the old divinity (Absolute Power), and I remember, that the decoration of the order of Cincinnatus, which I wore, and which at present would be regarded by many people, almost as a proof of one's being a demagogue, at that time excited the envy of all the young followers of kings.

The Empress received Edward Dillon with kindness, and particularly noticed M. Alexander de Lameth. Her feeling, as well as her ambition, loved to make a conquest wherever the person was worthy of being conquered; she was not ignorant, that men distinguished by their name, by their merits, by their actions, by their talent, by their writings, or by their success in the world, are excellent instruments to spread the renown of sovereigns who have flattered their self-love.

She made however, a laughable mistake, one day, while conversing with M. de Lameth respecting his uncle, the Marshal de Broglie. After having paid a just tribute of praise to the exploits

and the capacity of that illustrious Marshal, she said: "In truth, I have always seen with con-
"cern for the French nation, that so great a cap-
"tain, who has been its glory and its ornament,
"should not have a child to perpetuate his name,
"and sustain its splendour in the camp."

"Madam," replied M. de Lameth, "the regret
"you express is extremely honorable to him,
"but, happily, it is without foundation. Your
"Majesty is misinformed. My uncle has been
"as fortunate in marriage as in his military
"career; his family is very large; he is the father
"of twenty-two children."

I saw many generals at Kioff of whom I had known but little at Petersburgh, because they were either actively employed, or lived upon their estates at a distance from the court. Two, particularly attracted my attention: the one by the violence of his character, and the other by his whimsicalities and by an eccentricity, under which he delighted in concealing a genius and talents that eclipsed his rivals.

The first, General Kamenski, was lively, hard-hearted, petulant and passionate. A Frenchman, completely frightened at his anger and dreading the consequences of his menaces, sought an asylum in my house. He told me: "that, having
"entered into the service of General Kamenski,
"he had no reason but to be grateful for the
"treatment he had received while they remained
"in Petersburgh; but that no sooner had the
"General carried him off to one of his estates,

" than the scene was altogether changed. At a " distance from the capital, the modern Russian " disappeared, and the Muscovite entirely as- " sumed his place. He treated his people like " slaves, growled at them incessantly, paid them " no wages and overwhelmed them with blows " for the least fault, and often, even without any " provocation at all."

Exceedingly distressed by such tyrannical usage, the Frenchman fled to Kioff, whither the emissaries of the General pursued him. One of them had the humanity to let him know that their master had sworn that he should undergo an exemplary punishment if he were taken.

Indignant at such conduct, I went in search of the persecutor to acquaint him that I would not allow a Frenchman to suffer such oppression. Our interview was animated. Kamenski told me, " that he thought it extremely strange that " I should interfere with his domestic affairs, and " that I had undertaken the defence of a worth- " less fellow, who should be well chastised in " spite of me."

" Very well, General," said I, " I have a " double right to protect your victim; I am a " minister and a Frenchman. If you do not " make me a formal promise to give up all " pursuit of a man, free by the laws of my coun- " try, and against whom you have no right to " proceed as against a slave, I shall instantly " repair to the Empress to complain, as a minis- " ter, of your conduct; and, afterwards, as a

" French officer, I shall demand of you an ex-
" planation of the insults which you have offered
" to one of my countrymen; insults which, from
" this moment, I shall regard as personal to my-
" self, since I have taken him under my protection."

An affair of honour had no terror for the General, but the dread of the anger of the Empress intimidated him; he made me the promise which I required and we separated.

A long while afterwards, the same General gave me incontestable proofs of his memory and of his resentment. In the first war of the French against the Russians, a war which was gloriously terminated by the peace of Tilsit, my son, General Philip de Segur, after a brilliant charge, having pursued the enemy, who were retreating, with too much ardour, he was surrounded, wounded and taken prisoner. He was carried before General Kamenski.

Kamenski, after having demanded his name, wished him to give some information respecting the position and strength of the French army. Upon his refusal, he treated him with the most infamous severity. Notwithstanding his wounds, he wished to compel him to go through the snow, which was knee deep, nearly twenty leagues on foot, without allowing him any time to be attended to or have his wounds dressed. But his own officers, indignant at this cruelty, gave my son a kibitzi, and a few days afterwards he arrived at the quarters of General Apraxin, who indemnified him by his urbanity and courtesy for

the bad treatment which he had received at the hands of the vindicative Muscovite.

I have since been informed that this same Kamenski, whose violence was not at all moderated by age, became himself its victim; for that one of his own peasants, in a fit of despair, cleft open his head by a blow with a hatchet.

General Souwaroff was calculated to excite curiosity in a very different way. By his overwhelming courage, by his ability, by the confidence with which he inspired the soldiers, he had found the way, even in an absolute monarchy where every thing was given by favour, to advance himself rapidly, although he was without fortune, without interest, and sprung from a family which was not respected.

He had carried every step of his promotion at the point of the sword. Whenever there was a danger to be combated, a difficult order to be executed, or a desperate undertaking to be attempted, the name of Souwaroff was the first which presented itself to his commanders.

But, as from his earliest steps in his glorious career, he saw himself the object of the restless jealousy of many courtiers and favourites, who might be sufficiently powerful to oppose his advancement, he formed the strange design of concealing his transcendant merit under fantastic forms of folly.

Nothing could be more luminous than his plans, more profound than his conceptions, more rapid than his execution; but, in ordinary life and

in public, his countenance, his gestures, his words, were stamped with a species of originality, it may even be said of extravagance, which quieted the fears of the ambitious. They regarded him as a useful instrument for action and for labour, but as incapable of injuring them, and of disputing with them the enjoyment of honors, reputation and power.

By a singular coincidence, this hero of despotism, in order to raise himself to glory borrowed a mask, similar to that by which the hero of liberty, Brutus, was protected under the reign of Tarquin.

Souwaroff, respectful to his commanders and affable to his soldiers, shewed himself with his equals unpolite, haughty and without manners. He astonished those who were not acquainted with him, by the multiplicity, the rapidity and the conciseness of the questions which he addressed to them, and as if he had a right to make them go through a species of interrogatory. This was his manner of learning the character of a man in an instant; he thought unfavorably of those whom he embarrassed, and conceived a sudden esteem for those who answered him clearly and without hesitation.

I received a proof of this at Petersburgh; my laconic replies pleased him, and during his short stay there he dined with me frequently.

I remember I asked him once, whether it was true that, when he was in the army, he seldom slept, subduing nature, even without necessity,

lying always upon straw, and never drawing off his boots nor quitting his arms: "Yes," he said, "I hate idleness; and from my fear of sleeping, "I have always a cock in my tent which is "very punctual in frequently awaking me; when "I wish now and then to enjoy luxury and repose "comfortably, I take off one of my spurs."

When he was made Marshal of the Empire, he himself arranged his reception in the presence of the soldiers after a most whimsical manner. Having placed in a church, on both sides of the nave and in lines, as many chairs as there were general officers senior to himself, he entered the building in a waistcoat, and leaped clean over each chair, in a style similar to the jumping of school-boys when they play at leap-frog, and after having thus neatly called to mind the way in which he had surpassed his rivals, he invested himself in the Marshal's grand uniform, covered himself with the numerous decorations which had been heaped upon him, and afterwards gravely invited the priests to terminate the ceremony by a *Te Deum*.

It is said, that when the Emperor of Austria sent him the most honorable of his orders, he received the messenger in person, and decorated himself publicly before a large looking-glass, with the most extraordinary ceremonies.

When compelled by the errors of Korsakoff to fall back in Switzerland before General Masséna, he had a ditch dug and placing himself in it, cried out to his soldiers that they ought to trample

him under foot and cover him with earth, if they wished to fly instead of facing the enemy.

Souwaroff had not arrived at the summit of military honours, at the period when I was in Russia. We could then see in him nothing but a brave soldier, a general officer, daring when with the army, but very eccentric when at court.

The first time of his meeting with M. de Lameth, the defect of whose character was never that of being too pliant, the conversation which passed between them appears to me to be original enough to be worth relating.

" To what country do you belong? said the General abruptly.—" France.—What profession? " —Military. — What rank? — Colonel. — Your " name?—Alexander de Lameth.—Good."

M. de Lameth, a little annoyed at this short interrogation, called on the General in his turn, and looking at him steadfastly, said: " To what " country do you belong?—Russia.—What pro- " fession?—Military.—What rank?—General.— " What name?—Souwaroff.—Good." Both immediately fell a laughing, and thenceforward were very good friends.

Prince Potemkin was absent all this time, being incessantly occupied with making preparations for a grand spectacle, which he had intended to exhibit before his Sovereign from the moment when she entered his government.

During his absence no one dared to censure him openly; envy, instead of attacking him boldly, secretly undermined him on every side, and

on every opportunity slight murmurs and indirect complaints were insinuated to the Empress against the capricious administration and the pride and injustice of the powerful favorite. Marshal Romanzoff alone gave a noble and open utterance to his opinion, his wrongs and his discontent.

The Prince soon returned; and from that moment nothing but praises were to be heard, and nothing was to be seen but homage paid with the most obsequious adulation.

The Prince of Nassau came with him, and I welcomed him as a faithful brother in arms. I presented him to the Empress, whom he thanked for a gift which she had made him of an estate in the Crimea, and also for the permission to hoist the Russian flag upon his towers.

Her Majesty invited him to join her in her tour; and, in accordance with the directions of my court, I authorised him provisionally to adopt the uniform which is worn by proprietors of estates in each of the Russian governments.

At length, the Prince de Ligne returned from Vienna; his presence reanimated those who languished, dissipated even the appearance of *ennui*, and gave a glow to all our amusements. From that moment we began to feel that the severity of a heavy winter was passing away, and that the joyous spring would not delay its reappearance.

The Empress once or twice a week held a full court, and gave alternately grand balls and fine concerts. On other days her table did not con-

sist of more than eight or ten covers; the three ambassadors who attended her were constantly admitted, as was the Prince de Ligne, and frequently the Prince de Nassau.

We passed all our evenings with her, when she no longer permitted either constraint or etiquette; the Empress disappeared, and nothing more was seen than an amiable woman; we related stories, played at billiards and conversed on literature

This Princess took it into her head to learn to make verses: I was occupied eight days in making her acquainted with the rules of poetry; but, from the moment we attempted to put them in practice, both she and I discovered that time had never been worse employed, and I believe that it would be difficult to meet with an ear less susceptible of the harmony of verse than hers was.

Her brain, entirely filled with reasoning and politics, afforded no images to enrich her thoughts; her mind seemed to sink under the fatigue of a toilsome search for metre and for rhyme. She allowed, therefore, that her efforts in this species of composition would not be more happy than those of the celebrated Mallebranche, who said, that after very great labour, he was incapable of making any other verses than the two following:

Il fait le plus beau temps du monde
Pour aller à cheval, sur la terre et sur l'onde.

The weather's as fine as weather can be
On horseback to ride o'er the land and the sea.

Catherine appearing vexed at the inefficacy of her efforts, Mr. Fitz-Herbert said to her: " It is " all very right, Madam, none should aim, at " the same moment, at every kind of glory, and " you should have been willing to content your- " self with those two fine verses which you com- " posed upon your bitch and your physician.

" Ci-gît la duchesse Anderson,
" Qui mordit monsieur Rogerson."

" Here lies the Duchess Anderson,
" Who once bit Mr. Rogerson."

I therefore renounced this poetical education, declaring to my august scholar, that she must, through absolute necessity, thenceforward be content never to make laws and conquests but in prose.

The Prince de Ligne did not permit our little circle to be at all incommoded by languor. He related a hundred pleasing anecdotes, and composed madrigals and songs extemporaneously. He alone, assuming the right to say every thing which occurred to him, mingled with his charades and sketches of character something of politics; and, although his gaiety occasionally degenerated into folly, he introduced at times, with the clattering of the bells, some useful and striking morals. He was a courtier by habit, a flatterer by system, good in his natural character, and a philosopher from taste; his pleasantries created laughter, but never wounded.

One day he hoaxed Count Cobentzel and myself in a curious manner. We had been subject for some time, as well as himself, to a slight fever, which came upon us by fits. He soon reproached us with our carelessness and our refusal to adopt any remedies; he exaggerated the change in our appearance, exhibited much concern, and finally assured us that he had determined to set us an example, to be careful and to take every means to cure himself, in order that he might be able to prosecute the journey.

Yielding to his importunities, Cobentzel, who suffered from a sore throat, was copiously bled, and I took one or two doses of physic. A few days afterwards we rejoined the Empress, who said to the Prince: "You look very well to-day; "I thought you were indisposed; has my phy- "sician been with you?"—"Oh! no, Madam," he replied, "my complaints were not of long "duration. I doctor myself in a peculiar way; "as soon as I feel myself unwell, I call upon my "two friends: I bleed Cobentzel and purge Se- "gur, and I am cured." The Empress congratulated him upon his receipt, which, she said, she was tempted to try, and she did not fail to rally us without mercy upon our docility.

The arrangements at Kioff presented three pictures extremely different from each other. The palace of the Empress exhibited alternately the most splendid court or the most select and delightful society.

Cobentzel, Fitz-Herbert and myself, having

undertaken to do the honors of the city to Russians and to foreigners, our house might justly have been designated the European Coffee House. It was never empty. You might see people there from all nations, and hear the languages of all countries. They were entertained with all kinds of dishes, fruits and wines; they played at all sorts of games; and, in conclusion, the time was passed in general discourse or in private conversations of all descriptions, from the most important to the most ordinary.

On the other hand, if you repaired to the vast monastery of Petschersky, to visit Prince Potemkin, for it was there he had his establishment, it seemed as if you were present at an audience of the Vizier of Constantinople, Bagdad or Cairo: silence and a kind of fear reigned there.

Either from natural indolence, or from an affected importance, which he considered as useful and politic, this powerful and capricious favorite of Catherine, after having appeared in the grand uniform of Marshal, covered with decorations and diamonds, loaded with embroidery and lace, and with his head dressed, curled and powdered like the oldest of our courtiers, generally put on a morning gown, with his neck bare, his legs half naked, his feet in large slippers, and his hair flat and badly combed. He lay effeminately stretched out upon a large sofa, surrounded by a crowd of officers and the most considerable personages of the empire, rarely inviting any of them to be seated, and almost always pretending to be

too much occupied by a game at chess, to perceive the Russians, or the foreigners who arrived in his saloon.

I was well acquainted with all his singularities, but as scarcely any one of the bystanders was aware of the intimate familiarity which existed between this eccentric minister and myself, I confess that my self-love experienced some embarrassment, upon the reflection that so many strangers would behold the minister of the King of France exposed, like any other person, to submit to his insolence and his caprice.

In order therefore, that no one should be deceived, I adopted this course: when I had arrived at the monastery, and had been announced, perceiving that the prince did not at all discompose himself, not even so much as to raise his eyes from the chess-board, I went directly up to him, I took his head between my hands, I embraced him cordially and without ceremony, and then set myself down by his side upon his sofa. This familiarity of course astonished the spectators, but it was perfectly intelligible to him.

As for the rest, either from regard for me, or from a personal respect towards de Lameth and Dillon, who had been recommended to him, he welcomed them with sufficient politeness and distinction.

A short time afterwards, a Spaniard arrived at Kioff, whose name, mingled with political events, has since acquired a sad celebrity; he was called Miranda, and was an intelligent, spirited, intri-

guing and daring man. Born in America, he was connected by ties of consanguinity with the family of Aristeguitta, with whom I had been acquainted at Caracas, and of whom I have spoken at the commencement of these Memoirs.

During the course of the war, the Spanish government discovered that Miranda, failing in his duty, had delivered to the British Admirals, plans and charts of Cuba, and of other Spanish colonies.

They endeavored to arrest him; he escaped, was stripped of his rank, and pursued by all the agents of Spain. Being pensioned by England, he brought his ambitious discontent and his resentments into Europe, awaiting an opportunity of returning to Caracas, as soon as circumstances might offer a possibility of his bringing about a great revolution, which he had for a long while meditated.

At that time, I did not know all these facts, but as he was not provided with any letters of introduction or recommendation, I refused to present him to the Empress, when he requested me to do so. Miranda was not discouraged by this; he had known the Prince of Nassau at Constantinople, and got him to introduce him to Prince Potemkin; his wit charmed them, and they obtained a secret audience for him with the Empress.

When there, he found means to persuade Catherine that he was a martyr to philosophy, and a victim to the inquisition; in short, she took a

fancy to him, and when he left, to go to Petersburgh, she ordered the Vice-Chancellor to receive him with distinction, as a man whom she honored with her esteem. It will be seen hereafter what embarrassment his presence caused me, when I returned to that capital.

On those days on which the Prince Potemkin did not give public audiences in his monastery, or, to speak more properly, did not hold his Asiatic court, I saw him with greater pleasure in the intimacy of friendship, surrounded by his amiable nieces and a small circle of friends. He was then quite another man, always original certainly, but witty, free from formality, and capable of diffusing a lively interest in all kinds of conversation, however different.

The regulations of the Russian custom-houses were then extremely penal, very harsh, and enforced with great severity.

Foreign ministers, themselves, were compelled to limit the bags they gave their couriers, to a certain size, previously regulated, in order to preclude all possibility of their mixing with their dispatches any contraband goods; but, in despotic countries, those who make the laws and whose duty it is to enforce their execution, are the very persons who violate them most frequently. The following is so singular an instance of this, that I think it worth relating.

When my *valet-de-chambre* Evrard, whom I had sent as a courier to Versailles, with the treaty of commerce signed, returned to Kioff, bringing with

him the ratifications of my court, as it was known that he was also charged with presents from the King to the ministers of the Empress, the officers of the custom houses on the frontier, had received orders to let him pass without searching him; he was aware of this, and determining unknown to me, to profit by it, arrived in Kioff with a carriage full of laces, jewels, and all sorts of contraband articles.

One day, when breakfasting with Prince Potemkin, his nieces, several ladies, and a dozen other persons, I observed that every now and then some of the company left the apartment; they seemed to take it by turns, and when they quitted the parlour, they went into another room, the door of which was kept closed with great care. Whenever I attempted to join them, one of the Prince's nieces prevented me, by immediately entering into some interesting conversation, or detained me by the most engaging attentions. At length, my curiosity becoming more and more excited by this continual opposition, I escaped, ran out, and opening quickly the door which had been so carefully closed, I saw a large, handsome table, surrounded by curious persons, and purchasers, covered with an immense quantity of jewels and other prohibited goods which my delighted *valet-de-chambre,* was displaying with the utmost complaisance, while he praised their beauty and announced their price.

At the sight of me, surprise appeared in every countenance: the Prince, the spectators, the pur-

chasers, all looked like culprits taken in the very act. My newly made merchant, astonished and disconcerted, destroyed the order of his shop with the greatest precipitation. I looked extremely angry, reprimanded the smuggler very severely, and told him, that from that moment, he must no longer consider himself in my service.

In vain the ladies endeavoured to soften me, in vain they entreated me to pardon him; during a whole hour I was proof against their solicitations, and at length, I yielded to nothing less than the request of the prince, the Prime Minister, who begged of me to pardon the criminal. "I cannot "refuse," I said, "since, by a strange accident, "you are a receiver of his goods, and an accom- "plice in his crime."

In the midst of these gaieties, these feasts, balls, games and festivals, politicians were not inactive, and in a short time a storm broke out at Constantinople which was but the forerunner of those which since then have not ceased, during nearly thirty years to shake and agitate the whole of Europe.

At that time, all politicians feared that a rupture between Russia and the Porte would excite the rivalry of powerful states, and cause a general war. It appeared in fact evident, that, if the Emperor and the Empress endeavoured to destroy the equilibrium by adding to their kingdoms the vast possessions of the Turks in Europe, France, Prussia and Sweden, would oppose, with this aggrandisement, all their efforts,

even if England should join the imperial courts, in the hope of profiting by this revolution, by taking possession of the islands in the Archipelago.

So little can the human mind foresee the nearest events, that no one, at this moment, had any notion of the consequences attendant on the unimportant troubles which then agitated France. It was believed on the contrary, that her internal distress and embarrassment, caused by the alarming state of her finances, would leave her little weight in European affairs; so that, at this period, all were anxiously looking towards the East.

The court of Catherine became the centre of politics, and the object on which the attention of every statesman was fixed. Catherine the Second, whose mind was generally so penetrating, took so false a view under these circumstances of the situation of the French government, that she foresaw nothing but security, glory and happiness.

It was at Kioff that I received the last letter of M. de Vergennes. This minister desired me to communicate to the Empress, the resolution which the King had taken to collect around him all the considerable men in his kingdom.

On hearing this, the Empress demonstrated the greatest satisfaction; she spoke of it with enthusiasm, and beheld already in this assemblage a sure token of the re-establishment of our finances and of the settlement of public order.

"I cannot," said she, "eulogize too much a "young King, who becomes in the hearts of "Frenchmen, the worthy rival of Henry the "Fourth."

All the foreigners who were at Kioff, without distinction of nation, congratulated me on this event; so true is it, that, at that moment without its being perceived, liberal sentiments, noble ideas, the desire of seeing abuses reformed, of lowering prejudices, of weakening arbitrary power, and of obtaining liberty, (which, to speak with accuracy, is at the bottom nothing more than justice), secretly agitated every bosom, exalted every mind, and animated every heart. Individuals, not dreading as yet, the injuries and disadvantages which their own private interests were to receive, consulted only the general welfare.

Happy days which have never since returned! What virtuous illusions surrounded us in those times of artless inexperience! Why has the breath of passion and the fury of party spirit destroyed all nobleness of soul, poisoned the most natural sentiments, and delayed, for a long time, the acquisition of that happiness towards which mankind seemed to be rapidly approaching; actuated by one common feeling, guided by the light of reason and of truth, lights too soon changed into torches of discord.

I then entered sincerely into the brilliant hopes, which the greater part of men at that time entertained, and I could with difficulty comprehend,

or account for the gloomy presentiments with which that famous assembly of notables inspired my father. In his letters to me, he spoke of nothing but misfortunes to be feared, and confusion and disturbance rendered almost inevitable.

"The King," said he, in his letter to me, "having asked my opinion on the advice he had "received, to collect around him all the nobles "and men of consequence, I besought him to "consider well the consequences of such a mea- "sure; for, in the present state of things, when "the minds of men are in a state of fermentation, "the notables might prove only *the seed of the* "*States-General:* and who could calculate all the "consequences of their assembling?"

The event has justified this prediction of an old minister; but it then appeared to me as if dictated only by a spirit of routine and prejudice, which dreaded any kind of innovation, even the most useful.

A few days afterwards, I heard of the death of the Count de Vergennes: this was a misfortune for France, and indeed, one may almost say, a loss for Europe, over which his conciliating disposition, foresight and wisdom, had latterly exercised a salutary influence.

The Count de Montmorin, who succeeded him, acquainted me in the most honorable terms with the King's satisfaction at my conduct in Russia. His Majesty had desired him to inform me, that he was quite satisfied with my behaviour in all respects; but, at the same time, he ordered me

to use every possible means of discovering the causes of an unpleasant and direct misunderstanding, which had just taken place at Constantinople, between M. de Choiseul the King's ambassador, and M. de Bulgakoff the Russian minister, with regard to new controversies which might occasion war, notwithstanding the care we had taken to avoid it.

At the same time, the Count de Choiseul wrote me word that M. de Bulgakoff, breaking out all at once into threats against the ottoman ministry, had imprudently renewed a quarrel terminated by our mediation, and aggravated still farther his ill conduct by not communicating any of his proceedings to the French ambassador.

I knew that M. de Choiseul always saw the worst side of things, and frequently abandoned himself to the most immoderate anxiety; but now his grievances were real, and his fears well grounded. He conducted himself, in this difficult affair, with dignity, skill and prudence. His language was noble and moderate; the advice which he gave the divan was at once firm and sensible. By this conduct, in case they were sincere, he removed every obstacle to peace; and, if Russia desired war, he took from injustice every plausible pretext, and compelled bad faith to appear in the face of the whole world in its true character.

My position became delicate: on the one hand, it was not unlikely, as I was in the Empress's retinue and intimacy when I concluded with her

ministers a treaty of commerce, that I might be suspected of an unjust partiality for Russia, which would induce me to sacrifice my duty to gratitude, and this imputation it was desirable to avoid.

On the other hand, it was necessary not to express myself with too much warmth, lest I should irritate pride and completely fail in the office of conciliator with which I was entrusted. In short, I had no time to lose; I could not wait for instructions, the affair was urgent; silence, or any appearance of debate or shuffling, appeared to me unwise.

Compelled to take a decided part, at the risk of what might be the result, I made choice of that which seemed the most consistent with the dignity of the King and of my country. Having resolved on the line of conduct I would adopt, I requested a conference with Count Bezborodko, minister of foreign affairs, and told him formally that the King, after having granted his solicited mediation, and after having obtained, by his good offices, the redress of those grievances of which the Russian court complained, could not see with indifference the same quarrel revived, without our receiving the slightest intimation of it, and a convention which had been so formally and so recently concluded by the care of his Majesty, wholly disregarded.

Among other injuries, I complained that the positive assurance which had been given me, that the Russian government would not require from

the Porte a formal recognition of the rights of the Empress over Georgia, had been forgotten.

I added that, to demand such a recognition now, without our knowledge, and without any fresh motive, was a step so inconsistent with the friendship subsisting between the two sovereigns, that I attributed that proceeding solely to the imprudent zeal of M. de Bulgakoff, who had probably gone beyond, or misunderstood his instructions. I concluded by saying, that I waited a positive answer, in order that I might be able to clear up the doubts of the King on so unforeseen an event.

The Russian minister replied: "that the Empress was ready to renew to the King, the assu-
"rance of her friendship. That Princess," added he, "has every reason to be satisfied with the
"agreement entered into at Constantinople, un-
"der the direction of his most christian Majesty;
"she wishes for nothing more than its fulfillment,
"but at present, it is far from being attended to.
"The Porte, instead of addressing to the Pacha of
"Achalzig such a firman as it had promised,
"charged him to open a negociation with the Czar
"of Georgia, Heraclius, whom it always calls its
"vassal. It assures that Prince of protection
"against the Lesghis, and only allows him to re-
"ceive a small number of Russian troops into his
"kingdom, and it is even proposed to him to corrupt
"those troops for the service of the Ottoman Porte.

"Heraclius," continued the minister, "indig-
"nant at this clause, has broken off the negocia-
"tion, and has sent us word to that effect. It

" was in consequence of these facts, that M. de " Bulgakoff received an order, not to address an " official note to the divan, but to complain verbal- " ly, and to press the sending of the firman to the " Pacha, agreeably with the convention: for the " Empress will never forego her rights over Geor- " gia, although she has forbidden M. de Bulgakoff " to demand a formal recognition of her title to " the sovereignty.

" With regard to the Tartars of Kuban, as they " make daily incursions into the Russian terri- " tory, we content ourselves with saying to the " Turks: if they are your subjects, punish them; " if they are not, suffer us to do so.

" The Porte obtained permission to take in " Crimea salt, for the consumption of a hundred " thousand men; and carried away a sufficient " quantity for a million. The Zaporavian cos- " sacks, who have taken shelter in the states of " the Grand Seignor, ought to have been kept by " his orders beyond the Bug; he has permitted " them to settle near Oczakoff. These two last " subjects of complaint, however, are insignificant " points of policy which the neighbouring coun- " tries will adjust among themselves, without " their becoming the ground of serious disagree- " ment. To conclude, M. de Bulgakoff had re- " ceived orders to treat the French ambassador " with the most perfect confidence, and I shall " acquaint him with the Empress's disapproba- " tion, if he has neglected that duty."

I did not delay making myself master of the

causes of a misunderstanding, not less alarming than unexpected; there had been little sincerity on either side. The Turks had in fact, sought to elude the execution of their promise, with respect to the firman.

The Russian minister, prudent and guarded in his instructions, had merely desired M. de Bulgakoff to complain to the Porte verbally, and that in a moderate strain; but, at the same time, that minister had received instructions of a very different kind from Prince Potemkin, who secretly wished for war, in the hope of commanding an army, and obtaining the ribbon of St. George, the only one now wanting to his vanity.

Whether M. de Bulgakoff feared displeasing that powerful minister, or whether he thought him better acquainted with the secret wishes of the Empress, than the other members of the council, I know not, but he yielded to his suggestions, grew angry, and assumed a haughty and threatening tone; dreading the opposition of our ambassador, he concealed from him all his proceedings, and thus he turned an unimportant discussion into a serious quarrel, which was still farther augmented by the active intrigues of England and Prussia.

These two powers, discontented with the treaty of commerce which I had just concluded, between France and Russia, caused it to be considered by the Ottoman ministry, as a treaty of alliance, hostile to the Porte.

But, that which raised this spirit of irritation to its height, was the immense gathering of troops made by Prince Potemkin, near the Euxine Sea, under pretence of rendering the pompous voyage of the Empress a more magnificent and imposing spectacle in the eyes of Europe; of course, the Sultan could not see, without the greatest anxiety, the Russian provinces bordering on his kingdom, filled with infantry, cavalry and artillery, with so perfect an organization, and such an abundance of money and ammunition, that every thing was in readiness to commence hostilities, as soon as Catherine the Second should give the signal.

In the mean time my somewhat precipitate behaviour had taken effect; they endeavored to justify themselves; nay more, the Emperor did not seem to approve of a rupture. Prussia and England manifested clearly their opposition to the ambitious views of Russia, and every thing gave me reason to believe that the Empress, more prudent than her favorite minister, wished, for the present, to avoid a war, and that she had resolved to delay, till some future opportunity, the execution of her real and extensive project, the end of which was, not to take possession of Constantinople, but to add Moldavia and Wallachia to all her other recent conquests, and, after forming the whole into a new Grecian empire, to place the crown on the head of young Constantine.

Whatever might be the case, as soon as Prince Potemkin returned, Catherine reproached him so

severely for his precipitation, that he thought it necessary to enter into an explanation to me on that head.

" I confess," said he, " that when I heard of the " negociation entered into with Heraclius, and of " a new irruption of the Tartars, in which we lost " 300 cossacks, yielding to a momentary feel- " ing of anger, I led M. de Bulgakoff into an er- " ror, by giving him too threatening instructions; " but I can assure you, that, with regard to the " unadvised silence which he observed towards " M. de Choiseul, he misunderstood my inten- " tions, and I have just written to him to desire " that he will apologize for his conduct, and for " the future, communicate every proceeding to " your ambassador without reserve."

I instantly acquainted the Count de Choiseul with these explanations, and I informed him, at the same time, of the activity with which they were raising Russian armaments at Kherson and Sevastopol.

" Notwithstanding the pacific dispositions of " which I am assured," I said, " the dangers which " threaten the Ottoman empire increase; a year " of tranquillity is probably the utmost that we " can predict to that kingdom. Grievances in- " crease on every side, and the materials for pub- " lic declarations accumulate. In order to give " no appearance of reality to the suspicions, with " which malevolence has inspired the Turks " against us, both policy and good faith require " that, instead of lulling them into a false security

" at the very moment when the Russians are " making such formidable preparations for war, " and fitting out armaments on the Black Sea, " we should advise them in their turn, to put " themselves in condition to maintain a com- " manding and respectable defence."

Latterly, in truth, the political system of the Emperor seemed to have undergone a very material change: far from appearing ready to second the views of his ally Catherine the Second, he had desired the Count de Cobentzel, to make use of no reserve in his behaviour towards me, and to support my proceedings by every means in his power, hoping, that he should, by this line of conduct, induce the Russian government to give up the dangerous idea of overturning the Ottoman empire.

This language was at the bottom sincere; but many motives led me to believe, that, if the Emperor had determined to oppose the total expulsion of the Turks and the conquest of Constantinople, he was not so backward in allowing Catherine to take possession of Oczakoff and Akerman, in order that she might be contented to stop there, mistress without a rival, of the commerce of the Black Sea, as well as of the channels of the Borysthenes and the Dniester.

On this point, the opinion of M. de Choiseul agreed in every respect with my own; by degrees he drew the Turks from their lethargy, persuaded them to man their ships, to fortify their garrisons, and to place troops on the borders

of the Danube: in short, he concluded, by advising them to reply to the threats of M. de Bulgakoff in a firm and moderate, but dignified manner.

The discussions relative to the firman, the Tartars and the Zaporavians were continued. When the Empress communicated to me the new injuries which she stated she had received from the Porte, she assured me that, willing to sacrifice every thing to the love of peace, she would pass, unnoticed, the negociations entered into with Heraclius, and wait patiently until the Porte itself should recognise the indecency and injustice of its refusal to execute a convention made and sworn to under the mediation of France.

Demonstrations such as these and the conduct of Austria, would have been sufficient in other circumstances, to have removed any fears or doubts that I might have felt on the subject; but who could, with any degree of certainty, foresee events in a country, where a minister, was powerful and confident enough to send of his own accord, hostile orders to an ambassador, and to introduce or withdraw troops from Poland, without waiting the sanction of his Sovereign, or informing the other ministers of his proceedings?

While things were going on thus, I received, from my court, a dispatch which prescribed to me exactly the same behaviour, and the same language in the Turkish affairs which I had of my own accord adopted; and, a few days afterwards, M. de Montmorin, by the King's order,

obligingly congratulated me on having thus, in so delicate a situation, guessed the tenor of those instructions which I afterwards received.

Prince Potemkin, irritated at seeing his views frustrated by my proceedings, and also by those of the Count de Cobentzel, could not long contain himself, and his displeasure soon broke forth. "It is then decided," he said to me, "that your "nation, the most enlightened in the world, shall "eternally protect fanaticism and ignorance; and "under what pretence? Under that of not losing "a commerce for the possession of which you "might be indemnified by brilliant and solid ac- "quisitions in the Archipelago. The whole of "Europe has a right to accuse France, which "alone, seems obstinately bent on cherishing in "her bosom pestilence and barbarism."

It was always painful to me to combat an opinion of which I could not disapprove. In order, however, to discharge my duty, I replied, that "a man so enlightened as he, ought better "to comprehend and appreciate the motives of the "King of France, who, satisfied with seeing his "kingdom flourishing, quiet and respected, could "entertain no desire, but for the maintenance "of the general repose."

"The hope," I observed, "of an aggrandise- "ment, more apparent than real, will not induce "him to interrupt the happiness of his subjects, "to compromise the public tranquillity, to deprive "an ancient ally of his possessions, and in short, "to revive the time of the crusades, for the pur-

" pose of effecting a partition, which would in-
" flame the ambition, the cupidity and the jea-
" lousy of all the powers of Europe, and render
" it the theatre of a general war as long, as
" ruinous and as difficult to terminate as the
" war of thirty years."

At nearly the same time, Mr. Fitz-Herbert received despatches from the British cabinet, which refused to accede to the ultimatum sent by the Russian ministry. From this moment, all negociation respecting the renewal of a treaty of commerce between England and Russia, was finally broken off.

The ratifications of the treaty which I had concluded, had just been exchanged. Each of the four Russian plenipotentiaries received from the King forty thousand francs and the portrait of his Majesty, set in diamonds, worth the same sum. The Russian and French chanceries received each a thousand ducats.

The Empress gave me her portrait enriched with diamonds, some very fine furs, and forty thousand francs. A few days afterwards, she was painted in a travelling dress, and I received from her another portrait, a better likeness, a a copy from which is placed at the beginning of the second volume of these Memoirs.

In conformity with the orders which had been sent to me, I expressed to that Princess the satisfaction which the King had felt in establishing friendly relations with her. " His desire," I said, " is to extend and strengthen the confidence of

" which this treaty is the pledge, and to render " more and more intimate an union so conducive " to the repose of Europe, of which the balance " cannot be more effectually sustained than by " two great powers which, in their present posi- " tion, ought to have but one common interest." Her answer was very friendly, very obliging and as pacific as I could have hoped.

It was not enough to have signed a treaty of commerce, it was necessary that it should produce substantial results. I requested the Count de Montmorin to consult with the comptroller-general on the most proper means of encouraging the establishment of French houses in the ports of Russia, an establishment essentially necessary, and without which our treaty would have been a mere illusion.

With this view I directed attention to all the judicious regulations of the English factory; and, in order to encourage our navigation in the North, I proposed a great diminution in the duties on anchorage and ballast, with which our vessels are loaded, while they ought to be imposed only on foreign vessels.

I urged also the establishment in our ports of schools for the German and English languages, in order that our merchants might no longer be obliged to prefer English, Dutch or Hamburgh privateers to our own. These proposals and remonstrances were useless; the public mind was already too much agitated in France for our ministers to be able to devote themselves to any

object but guarding against a political crisis, of which they foresaw the approach.

The more they had to fear from internal troubles, the more they dreaded every event which might lead to war; and, therefore, the ministry again pressed me to endeavor with all diligence to penetrate the designs of the two imperial courts.

Many obstacles rendered my success in this point difficult. The persons who might have served me, the subordinate members of the administration, from whom I had derived assistance, were absent. I lived in the midst of a court which was informed of nothing. The political secrets, if there were any, were known only to Catherine, Prince Potemkin and Count Bezborodko. Never had I found myself so near the Sovereign and so far from a knowledge of the state of affairs.

As, however, on observing the new and indirect line of conduct pursued by Austria, it was easy to judge that the Emperor, although he might externally affect the most friendly disposition towards the Empress and an animosity against the Musulmans almost equal to hers, would yet secretly second our efforts to prevent a rupture with the Porte, I hoped that Count Cobentzel, as soon as the Emperor should have arrived, would be able to give me some more certain intelligence, the political intimacy which subsisted between his Sovereign and the Empress being calculated to obtain for him a freedom of

communication which was far from being extended to me.

The imagination of Catherine could not remain inactive; thus her plans were rather precipitate than well digested; and it was manifest that this precipitation destroyed in the end a part of the creations of her genius.

She wished, at one and the same time, to form a middle class, to admit foreign commerce, to introduce manufactures, to establish credit, to increase paper-money, to raise the exchanges, to lower the interest of money, to build cities, to create acadamies, to people deserts, to cover the Black Sea with numerous squadrons, to annihilate the Tartars, to invade Persia, to continue progressively her conquests from the Turks, to fetter Poland and to extend her influence over the whole of Europe.

These were no common undertakings, either in difficulty or extent; and, although there was undoubtedly much to do in a country so new to civilization, the actual success would have been much greater had fewer objects been attempted at a time, or if at least all projects of conquest had been renounced, and attention had been directed exclusively to internal prosperity, the only true glory of sovereigns.

As it was, Catherine already enjoyed some of the fruits of her labors. The mildness of her reign favored the rapid increase of the population; many manufactures had made progress; agriculture extended daily; the schools which had been

founded were gradually softening the manners and augmenting the intelligence of the people; the tribunals began to decide fairly and according to law, in all cases where persons of too great power were not concerned; slavery was mitigated; the rights granted to the nobility of meeting, electing their own syndics and judges, and addressing their complaints to the throne, imparted some activity to the landed proprietors, accustomed them to business, prepared useful instruments for the government, and prevented the two capitals of Russia from impoverishing the empire by engrossing, within themselves, industry, riches and consumption.

In spite of the desire of preserving peace, which was manifested towards me, I observed that there reigned an uneasiness and distrust, which but ill agreed with this pacific disposition. Horses and pass-ports were refused to all strangers who desired to go to Kherson in the Crimea, or into any other part of the dominions of Prince Potemkin.

M. de Lameth had just announced his intention to proceed to Constantinople by Kherson. He was not answered by a formal refusal, but the Prince begged me to persuade him to give up his project.

" In the present state of circumstances," said he, " this step would be viewed with an unfa-
" vorable eye by the Empress, it would foster
" the unjust prejudices against the French which
" are infused into her mind, and would injure
" me in the execution of a design which I have

" formed, in concert with you, of bringing her " to that feeling of confidence which is due to " the amicable disposition of your court. There " is not, it is true, a rupture between the Porte " and us; but, as both sides are arming, it " would be disagreeable to the Empress that " a French colonel, treated by her with distinc- " tion, should traverse all the Russian posts to " pass to the camp of the Turks. Still, howe- " ver," he added, " as minister, I am ready to " deliver you the passports if you persist in de- " manding them; but, as a friend, I recommend " you to avoid every thing that may interfere " with a friendly understanding so recently ef- " fected."

I replied " that this was attaching great im- " portance to the journey of a young Frenchman " whose only object was to obtain instruction " and amusement;" and assured him that " in " the time of war between England and us, if he " or any other Russian general had been in " France, we should have let him sail from Brest " for Portsmouth without the slightest uneasi- " ness."

Nevertheless, I did what he desired; for my part was to conciliate, not to irritate. M. de Lameth, though he was greatly astonished at such distrust, in an obliging manner consented, out of friendship to me, to submit to the disappointment.

M. de Choiseul surprised me always by the violence of his anxiety, by the frequency of his

complaints, by the activity with which he urged the warlike preparations of the Turks. And this although I had addressed despatches to him calculated to calm his apprehensions. But the whole was explained to me by the Count de Bezborodko; who informed me that a courier sent by him in the preceding month, bearing his despatches for M. de Bulgakoff, as well as mine for M. de Choiseul, had been attacked and robbed on the frontiers. It will be perceived that this incident did not slightly contribute to counteract all the measures which we had taken to satisfy the Porte and prevent a rupture.

Some days afterwards, Prince Potemkin threw out an insinuation relative to a treaty of alliance, which, according to him, it was desirable and possible to conclude between France and Russia. Taking advantage of this opportunity, I said, " that, above all, it was necessary that the views " of his court should be perfectly known; and " whether it sincerely renounced the destruction " of an empire, the preservation of which inte- " rested many great powers."

" It must needs be so," he said, " since you " are resolved to preserve the plague, and will " not believe that a christian government or " Greek republic would secure your commerce " better than the capricious and disdainful pride " of the Musulmans. But, at least, you ought to " consent to have the Turks confined within fron- " tiers more natural and suitable, in order to

" avoid those wars with which we are perpetual-
" ly threatened."

" I understand," I replied; " you wish for
" Oczakoff and Akerman. You might almost
" as well ask for Constantinople. It is declaring
" war by way of shewing your desire to preserve
" peace."

" No," answered he, " but if we are attacked, we
" will take such indemnities as we may find con-
" venient. It would be possible, however, with-
" out fighting, if you were once so disposed, to
" render the Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia
" independent, and thus to deliver these christian
" provinces from the knives of butchers and the
" plunder of banditti."

" Without fighting?" I asked. " You cannot
" think so; never will the Turks submit to such a
" concession, without having been vanquished."

Thus ended this interview, and I was convinced that with such notions in the mind of so powerful a minister, it would be difficult for the Count de Bezborodko to retain the Empress long in the pacific disposition which she had manifested, and which, for the moment, appeared to me to be sincere.

A courier from Constantinople brought Prince Potemkin some news, which irritated Catherine: M. de Bulgakoff informed him, that a number of French officers disguised as merchants, had repaired by land as far as Oczakoff. I said to the Prince, that it was to be expected that, at a moment when the frontiers of the Turks were at-

tacked, France, their ally, would employ for their defence the officers who had been sent to Constantinople for that purpose." I added, "that "their disguise alone seemed inexplicable to me, "since we acted openly and without dissimula- "tion."

The English availed themselves of this circumstance, to heighten the suspicions of the Empress; and for some time, her kindness towards me, was changed into marked coldness of manner.

The opposition party in Poland, during the residence of Catherine at Kioff, endeavored to injure Stanislas, the King, in her opinion. Marshal Potocki by his address, and General Branitski through the influence of his wife, the niece of Prince Potemkin, persuaded the Prince, that the King was opposed to the acquisitions which he wished to make in Poland. But the Prince of Nassau and Count Stackelberg, counteracted this intrigue and reconciled the prime minister and the King.

"Do you know what these nobles of Great and "Little Poland do here?" said the Prince de Ligne, "they deceive themselves, are deceived, "and deceive others. Their wives flatter the Em- "press, and persuade themselves that she does "not know that she was insulted in the barkings "of the last Diet. All watch for a glance from the "Prince Potemkin, and this glance it is difficult "to meet; for the Prince is somewhat squinting, "and one-eyed. These beautiful Polonese solicit "the ribbon of St. Catherine, to arrange it with

"coquetry, and to excite the jealousy of their "friends and relations.

"The Empress complains of the ministers of "England and Prussia, who spirit up the Turks; "while she is continually casting a sheep's eye at "the children of Mahomet. War is feared and "desired; Segur does what he can to put it off; "for my part, having nothing to risk, and perhaps "some glory to gain, I desire war with all my "heart, and then my friend reproaches me for "wishing for what must cause so many misfor- "tunes. Then I cease to wish for it, but fermen- "tation yet active in my blood, leads me back to "my former wish."

It will be easily conceived how far such a friend, enjoying all the confidence of Catherine, was from seconding me in keeping up her pacific disposition.

Stanislas proposed to the Empress to lend her some troops; an offer which she refused. Circumstances were favorable to Stanislas, but he was incapable of profiting by them. In the midst of a turbulent nation, with a character soft, trifling and brilliant, where firmness and vigour were required, this monarch, sinking under the weight of his feeble crown, was always tyrannized over by his neighbours, and braved by his subjects.

The winter had just disappeared; the waters of the Borysthenes were no longer enchained by frost; nature throwing off her veil of mourning for the warm colouring of spring, gave Catherine the signal for departure. Her fête was celebrated.

The Empress, after having religiously visited the monastery of Petschersky, distributed many favors and decorations, diamonds and pearls. "The Cleopatra of Kioff," said the Prince de Ligne, "does not swallow pearls, but she gives "many away."

On the first of May, 1787, the Empress embarked on board her galley, followed by the most stately fleet that a great river had ever borne. It was composed of more than eighty vessels, and the crews and guards amounted to three thousand men; at their head moved seven gallies of an elegant form, and of a majestic size, skilfully painted, and manned with crews, numerous, active, and uniformly dressed. The splendid apartments constructed on the decks, glittered with gold and silk.

The first of these galleys, which followed the Empress's, carried MM. de Cobentzel and Fitz-Herbert; the second was assigned to the Prince de Ligne and myself, the others were appropriated to Prince Potemkin, his nieces, the grand chamberlain, the first equerry, and those ministers and persons of distinction whom the Empress had allowed to accompany her. The remainder of the fleet carried the inferior officers, the provisions, and the baggage. Mademoiselle Protasoff and Count Momonoff were on board the same galley as her Majesty. We each of us found in ours, a room and cabinet as sumptuous as it was elegant, a convenient sofa, an excellent bed of chinese taffeta, and a mahogany secretary.

Each galley had its own music. A great number of boats and canoes fluttered unceasingly around the sides of the squadron resembling in appearance, the creations of magic rather than reality.

Our progress was slow; we stopped often, on which occasions we went on board fast sailing skiffs, walked on the borders of the river, or in the green and fertile islands through which the river flows.

An immense concourse of people saluted the Empress with noisy acclamations, while the sailors, belonging to her majesty's squadron, beat time to the noise of the cannon with their brilliant and painted oars on the waters of the Borysthenes.

There appeared on the borders of the river, a crowd of curious and admiring spectators, who came from all parts of the empire to gaze at our splendid retinue, and to present to their Sovereign the various productions of their different climates.

Small companies of Cossacks were frequently seen manœuvring on the plains washed by the Dnieper. The towns, villages, country houses, and even some of the rustic cabins, were so ornamented and disguised with triumphal arches, garlands of flowers and elegant architectural decorations, that their appearance completed the illusion, and transformed them into so many superb cities, or palaces suddenly raised, in gardens formed by magic.

The snow had disappeared : a beautiful verdure

covered the earth; the country was enamelled with flowers; a brilliant sun animated, enlivened and coloured every object. The air resounded with the harmonious music of our galleys; and the various costumes of the spectators on the banks of the river seemed to diversify this rich and moving picture.

As we approached some important towns, we beheld, ranged at their posts, squadrons of chosen troops, whose appearance was rendered splendid by the beauty of their arms, and the richness of their uniforms. The contrast this magnificent dress formed to the mean and destitute appearance of the regiments under Marshal Romanzoff, was sufficiently striking to inform us, that we were leaving the government of that old and illustrious warrior, and about to enter those which fortune had subjected to Prince Potemkin.

The weather, the season, nature and art, all seemed in a conspiracy to secure the triumph of this powerful favourite. He hoped that, by surrounding his Sovereign with so many delusions, at the moment when she was passing through the countries conquered by her arms, he should inflame her ambition, and inspire her with a desire of attempting, boldly, new conquests.

Our mornings alone were free. We employed them agreeably in reading, conversing, going from one galley to another, or in making excursions on the borders of the river.

At one o'clock, we regularly returned to the galley of the Empress, with whom we dined.

The number, who were admitted to her table, did not, in general, exceed ten persons. Once a week only she invited all who had the honor to accompany her. The dinner on those occasions was served on board a very large vessel, where sixty persons could be seated with great comfort.

Five days after our departure, we stopped at the town of Kanieff, where we were expected by the King of Poland and his court.

Kanieff was the place destined for the interview between Stanislas and Catherine; they had both been remarkable twenty-five years ago for their grace and beauty, both were formerly united by a reciprocal affection, and both, since that time, were no less changed in their appearance than in their sentiments.

When the Prince de Ligne and myself were on the point of witnessing this theatrical recognition, in which policy had a far greater share than affection, we could not help laughing at the grief and jealousy the young favorite experienced, or pretended to experience, at the prospect of a tête-à-tête so foreign to love; for, it was evident that Stanislas, finding his throne weak and tottering, had been induced by fear and interest alone, to solicit, from his haughty protectress, the favour of a temporary re-union, and that this meeting had been granted on the score of decency.

I never saw the Empress more agreeable than on the first day of our navigation; the dinner was very gay; we were delighted to leave the

dull town of Kioff, where we had been blockaded by the ice for three months.

Spring refreshed and enlivened us; the beauty of the weather, the magnificence of our fleet, the grandeur of the river, constant motion, the joy manifested by the multitude of spectators who ran along the banks, the military and Asiatic mixture presented to our view by the various costumes of thirty different nations, in short, the certainty of daily beholding new and curious objects, so awakened and excited our imaginations, that they seemed to travel even faster than we did.

Without growing grave or dull on any thing, we passed continually from one subject of conversation to another. We compared ancient to modern times, France to Attica, England to Carthage, Prussia to Macedonia, Catherine's empire to that of Cyrus. We related ancient and modern anecdotes, and the Empress told us several concerning Peter the Great and Elizabeth.

When we congratulated her on having, in so short a time, softened manners, but lately so cruel and barbarous, she replied: "Cetainly, old Rus-
"sians must see some difference between their
"time and ours. I cannot think without horror
"of the people's unhappy condition, under the
"reign of the Empress Anne, or rather under
"that of her minister Biren; that cruel man
"who governed her, killed, mutilated, or exiled
"more than seventy thousand persons.

We spoke of those savage tribes by whom the remoter parts of her empire were still peopled.

" The time of civilization," said she, " for those " wandering tribes has not yet arrived; since " their origin they have always preserved the " same simplicity of manners; living in tents, " and subsisting on the flesh and milk yielded " by their flocks, we may consider them happy, " for their chiefs are more like fathers than mas- " ters, and the few wants and desires which they " have, are easily satisfied. I know not whether " in civilising, I should not have spoilt them; the " small tribute of furs which they pay me, gives " them but little trouble, for they are accustomed " to, and take great delight in the chace."

Only one important change has taken place, with respect to these ancient hordes of Huns, Kirghis, Tartars, known formerly by a thousand different names; their wandering lives, their invasions, and the ravages they committed, rendered them for a long time the terror of the world; but the world has now become so civilised, peopled, armed and enlightened, that these hordes seeing all probability of conquest out of the question, have so entirely laid aside their warlike manners, that they very seldom fight even among themselves.

We talked of their religion, of their shamans or sorcerers, and of their idols. The Empress told us that one of their tribes had a species of worship difficult enough to understand. " Its " priests have preserved from time immemorial a " collection of prayers, of maxims or of canticles, " written in a language, the meaning of which has

" been lost to the world for a long period, and " they recite them through tradition, but without " understanding them."

" This circumstance," she added, " excited my " curiosity; I consulted the *learned*, who upon " this point, as upon many others, had *learned* " nothing. I ordered further research to be made, " and at length they thought they had found out " that those prayers were written in the ancient " and holy language of India—the Sanskrit."

As in the following part of our interview, the Empress rapidly passed in review the systems of the legislators of Greece, of Asia, of Rome, and of Arabia, I told her that she appeared to have entirely lost all right to censure the learned in the way she commonly did.

" Yes," added the Prince de Ligne, " for re- " member, Madam, that after what we have heard " we shall be obliged to include you in the list " of the learned, whom you treat so unmerci- " fully."

" I understand," she replied; " upon the whole " you are pleased with me; you praise me in the " gross, but I'll wager that you find abundant " subjects for criticism in detail. I make mistakes " of language and orthography every moment. " M. de Segur will agree that my head is thick " enough sometimes, since he has not been able " to teach me to compose even six verses; and " indeed I believe, notwithstanding his praises, " that if I was a private person in France, his

" charming ladies of Paris would not find me " agreeable enough to be invited to supper."

" I beg you, Madam, to recollect," I exclaimed, " that I am the representative of France here, " and that I ought not to allow it to be thus " calumniated."

As the Empress was in the vein, continuing the same tone she said to us, " Come now; what do " you think I should have. been in the world if I " had been a man and a private person?"

Mr. Fitz-Herbert replied, that she would have been a profound legislator; Cobentzel, a great minister or an ambassador; I assured her that she would have become a very distinguished general.

" There," she replied, " you are quite mis- " taken; I know my character; it is ardent; I " should have risked every thing in the pursuit of " glory, and being only a sub-lieutenant I should " have got my brains blown out in the first cam- " paign."

Another day we were speaking of all the conjectures which would be made in Europe about her journey. On this subject we were all of the same opinion, and thought that every where it would be supposed that she and the Emperor wished to conquer Turkey and Persia, and perhaps India and Japan; in short, that at this moment the cabinet of Catherine engaged the attention and excited the anxiety of all the others.

" This cabinet of Petersburgh," said she,

" which is now floating on the Dnieper, appears " then to be very great, since it gives so much " occupation to so many others."

" Yes Madam," said the Prince de Ligne, and " yet I know of no one that is smaller, for its " whole dimensions are but a few inches; it " extends from one temple to the other, and from " the root of the nose to that of the hair."

Our navigation was to last for 446 wersts, the distance between Kioff and Kaydak. At Kaydak the cataracts commence, and then we were obliged to enter our carriages again, to proceed to Kherson.

The Borysthenes or Dnieper, the source of which is near the village of Dnieproff, a hundred and fifty wersts from Smolensko, enlarges rapidly. The whole course is fifteen hundred wersts, or about four hundred leagues.

Before arriving at its mouth, between Kinburn and Oczakoff, it forms a gulf, the length of which is fifteen leagues, and the breadth four.

After arriving at Kaydak, its stream is interrupted by thirteen cataracts, which extend through a space of sixty wersts. Many of the rocks are underneath the water, and others rise considerably above the surface.

This river is rapid, and banks of sand sometimes render its navigation dangerous. It receives several tributary streams; on the side of Poland, the Ingoultz, the Bug and the Liman; on the side of Russia, the Soja, the Dezna, the Soula, the Ptia, the Vorskla, and the Samara.

Besides the villages scattered along its banks, there is the town of Tripolie, built by Wladimir, to defend the frontiers of his states. Like other places it was often a prey to civil wars, and was laid waste by the Tartars in the twelfth century.

At a short distance is a village called Staiki, on a brook which marks the frontier of Poland; after which, all the right bank belongs to the Poles.

Next is seen the town of Pereiaslaff, formerly inhabited by the Kozars, and on the right the town of Trektemiroff, which furnishes mill-stones to the neighbouring Polish and Russian territories.

At twenty wersts further is Kanieff, formerly a city, and now a town. It was here that the King of Poland received us.

Formerly a tribe of Tartars called Baskas, obtained possession of this city; at a later period, Achmet-Baska, one of their chieftains, divided them into *slobodes*, or tribes, and called them Cossacks. They made themselves masters of the surrounding country.

Subsequently, their numbers having been increased by the accession of bodies of Russian and Polish deserters, they constructed a fort which they called Tcherkasse. Wanderers from all nations soon joined them, and they founded a city, situated on an island of the Borysthenes, which became well known under the name of Kortitz.

They were then called Zaporavians to distinguish them from other tribes or slobodes esta-

blished above the cataracts. These amphibious robbers, engaged incessantly in war and pillage, having been gradually driven from their first establishments, united and settled in different islands of the Dnieper, whence they made incursions in crowds into Poland and Russia.

Catherine the Second, having at length destroyed this strange republic, established in her territory regular regiments of Cossacks, to whom lands and towns were assigned for their subsistence and residence.

We saw several of these towns which are not now occupied in the same way; one is Daubrowka, situated at the confluence of the Soula, and the Dnieper. Krementchuk, more remarkable, belonged to the regiment of Mirgorod; it was afterwards raised to the rank of a city. It is now the chief place of the government of Ekaterinoslaff. It is rather large, but is not distinguished by any monument. A floating bridge a quarter of a league long, serves for a communication between it and the town of Krioukoff, built on the opposite bank.

In descending the river you pass by the little town of Kliberda and Perevolochno, formerly ruined by the Tartars, and lastly, Ortik and Kaydak. Near this last place the Empress was to lay the first stone of the city of Ekaterinoslaff.

Each of the cataracts has a particular name; the first is called Kaydak; the most dangerous of all is the eighth called Ninajetinsk; it is 700

fathoms long, and there is a fall of six feet and a quarter.

From Kaydak to Kherson there was then little more than a desert plain. Kherson is situated at the mouth of the Dnieper, at twenty-two leagues from the sea.

It was necessary briefly to retrace here this part of our journey, in order not to have occasion to return to it. We now go back to our fleet, which we left just as it was ranged in line, with its colors flying, before the walls of Kanieff, the surrounding heights and plains glittering with arms and with the splendid uniforms of numerous Polish troops of cavalry.

The artillery of the fleet and of the town announced the arrival of the two monarchs. Catherine sent several of her officers of state, in an elegant shallop, to salute the King of Poland.

That Prince, in order to avoid all embarrassing etiquette, and wishing to preserve an *incognito* not altogether compatible with so much splendor, said to them: " Gentlemen, the King of Poland " has desired me to introduce to you the Count " Poniatowski."

When he had ascended the imperial galley, we pressed in a circle around him, anxious to witness the first emotions and to hear the first words of these illustrious personages, under circumstances so different from those under which they had formerly been seen, when they were united by love, separated by jealousy and pursued by hatred.

But our expectations were almost entirely disappointed; for, after a mutual salutation, grave, cold, and dignified, Catherine having given her hand to Stanislas, they entered a cabinet, where they remained shut up for half an hour.

As soon as this *téte-à-téte* was over, their Majesties rejoined us; and, as we had not been able to hear them, we endeavored to read their thoughts in their features: but the light clouds which rested on their countenances rendered our attempt difficult enough. On the side of the Empress there was a cloud of embarrassment and unusual restraint; and, in the eyes of the King, a certain expression of sadness which an affected smile could not entirely conceal.

That Prince now came and spoke in an obliging manner to all those amongst us whom he knew; the Empress presented the others to him. I was received very graciously by him.

Every thing had been so arranged as not to leave a vacant moment in a day, which both sides, perhaps, equally wished to shorten. We soon embarked in handsome boats, to go on board the galley where the entertainment was to be given. It was of the most sumptuous, delicate and elegant description.

The Empress had on her right hand the King, and on her left the ambassador Cobentzel. Prince Potemkin, Mr. Fitz-Herbert and I, were placed opposite to their Majesties.

Little was eaten and little was said; people

looked about them a great deal, listened to the fine music, and drank to the health of the King, amidst a grand salute of cannon.

On rising from the table, the King took from the hands of a page the gloves and the fan of the Empress, and presented them to her. He then looked for, and could not find his hat; the Empress, seeing it, had it brought to her, and gave it to him. "Ah! Madam," said Stanislas, on receiving it, "you formerly gave me a much "finer one."

We now returned to the imperial galley. The party remained but a short time together, and nothing remarkable occurred. The King re-embarked at eight o'clock, and returned to Kanieff.

As soon as it was dark, the hill of Kanieff glowed with fires; a winding ditch had been hollowed out on its sides and filled with combustible materials. When they were set on fire, they looked like the lava of a volcano, and the resemblance was the more striking, as, at the same moment, an explosion of a hundred thousand fire-works, on the top of the hill, made the very atmosphere appear as if inflamed; and the effect was heightened by the reflection of the burning scene in the waters of the Borysthenes.

Our fleet also was magnificently illuminated, so that, at this time, there was no night in our horizon.

The King having invited us all, we availed ourselves of his invitation. He gave a superb ball, but the Empress would not go to it. Sta-

nislas had in vain entreated her to prolong her stay for twenty-four hours; the time for favors was gone by with him. Catherine told him that she feared that, by this delay, she might keep the Emperor waiting, who was to meet her at Kherson.

We continued our route the next day, and thus terminated an interview which, in spite of its theatrical magnificence, will much better fill a place in history than in romance; for it was certainly not embellished and animated by any excess of tender sentiments.

Although, however, the journey of the King of Poland and his interview could not revive in the heart of the Empress an affection long since extinct, he yet derived some advantage from the conference, and the intrigues contrived against him by the opposition party were counteracted. Prince Potemkin even tried to effect a reconciliation between the King and his nephew, the great General Branitski; but the latter shewed so little of a conciliatory disposition, and displayed so much misplaced haughtiness, that they separated more at variance than ever.

As the King, on this occasion, had shewn much deference to the Empress, that Princess, touched by his conduct, resolved to support him against the attacks of his enemies. She gave him the decoration of the order of St. Andrew, and, with her sanction, the King invested General Engelhard, the nephew of Prince Potemkin, with the order of the White Eagle.

After setting out from Kanieff, Stanislas-Augustus hastened to meet the Emperor Joseph the Second, in the hope of obtaining his favor and turning aside the dangers which he apprehended from the power and ambition of his formidable neighbour, who had just manifested some desire to extend the frontiers of Gallicia.

The Emperor received him well, and assured him that, far from projecting any new dismemberment of Poland, he would oppose any other powers which might be desirous of effecting it. Empty promise! in the eyes of sovereigns who are the most severe in their private conduct, it is rarely thought necessary that policy should be restrained by the laws of morality: interest equally dictates the taking and the breaking of their oaths.

Stanislas, believing himself secure for the moment, was blind to the real danger of his position. Strength alone secures independence; it is already lost when it has no safety but in foreign protection. It is by shewing ourselves ready for combat that we inspire respect, and, instead of protectors, obtain allies.

Our navigation continued to be fortunate. We were only delayed now and then by unfavorable winds, and we arrived, without accident, at Krementchuk, on the 10th of May.

The dulness of our residence at Kioff, the severity of the season, and, above all, the discontent of Marshal Romanzoff, had rather damped the natural gaiety of Catherine. On

landing at Krementchuk, a very different scene presented itself to our view; the spring, giving new life to nature, imparted to all around an air of cheerfulness, and the freshness of the early verdure rendered even the marshes an agreeable object.

A mansion of large extent, built and arranged according to the taste of the Empress; an English garden, into which the magic of Prince Potemkin had caused trees of extraordinary size to be transplanted, at great expence; a charming prospect, varied by wood, water and flowers; twelve thousand men newly armed and equipped; all the nobility of the government assembled and richly dressed; a collection of merchants from all parts of the empire; and, besides all this, the pleasure of being in motion after three months of inactivity, with that also of advancing towards the close of the extraordinary journey, which had fixed the attention of all Europe: these were the preludes to the novel scenes of which I was about to be a witness.

The satisfaction of Catherine, nourished every day by new and exciting objects, was manifest to every one. Prince Potemkin, always and in every thing extraordinary, shewed himself as active in his governments as he was indolent at Petersburgh.

All the means which his lively imagination, his unbounded power and his profound knowledge of the character of his Sovereign could furnish him with, were employed by him, with inconceivable

address, in flattering her vanity and encouraging her ambition.

He was able, as if by some prodigy, to struggle against every obstacle, to overcome nature, to shorten distance, to decorate misery, to deceive the eye as to the dull uniformity of sandy plains, and the mind as to the tediousness of a long journey, and to give an appearance of life and fertility to the barren desert.

All the stations were so measured as to avoid even the slightest fatigue, and care had been taken that the fleet should anchor only before towns or villages in picturesque situations. Large flocks gave animation to the meadows; groups of peasants enlivened the banks; and numerous boats full of youths and girls, who were singing the rustic airs of their country, incessantly surrounded us. Nothing was forgotten.

It must be admitted that, if this prime minister, a middling general and a capricious politician, shewed that he was far from being a great statesman, he at least proved that he was an accomplished courtier.

Taking away, however, all that was artificial in his creations, there were also some realities. When he took possession of his immense government, the population was reckoned at only two hundred and four thousand inhabitants; and, under his administration, it had risen, in the course of very few years, to eight hundred thousand; still a small number for a province two hundred leagues long and one hundred wide.

This additional population was composed of Greeks, Germans, Poles, and soldiers and sailors, invalided and discharged. A Frenchman, who had been settled three years in this country, told me that in passing through it he found each successive year, new villages founded and flourishing in places, which a year before he had seen totally unoccupied.

The Prince indulged us at Krementchuk, with the spectacle of a grand review of forty-five squadrons of cavalry and a numerous body of infantry. I have seldom seen finer men or better equipments. Their movements served to give us an idea of the Russian tactics, which were so formidable to the Turks, although they must have been insufficient against other troops. Since that time, we have given them able lessons of which they have made but too good use.

All their manœuvres, when I saw them, consisted in marching in four columns, covered by rifle-men preceded by a corps of Cossacks. If the enemy then advanced, the four columns formed into four square battalions, three men deep and hollow in the centre. The Cossacks retired behind them and formed into a line in the two intervals, so that the line of battle presented the appearance of four bastions and two curtains. The artillery was stationed at the angles of the squares.

At this moment, it was to be supposed that they were surrounded, that being the Turkish mode of attack, and a spirited firing followed.

The enemy was now supposed to be in disorder; the squares advanced, the rifle-men went out of their ranks, and the Cossacks, their lances in hand, and with loud cries, flew to the pursuit of the vanquished to complete their defeat.

After this brilliant review, the Empress expressing her satisfaction to the Prince, said to him with a joy which came from her heart· "From Petersburgh to Kioff, I thought I saw "the springs of my empire relaxed and worn out; "but here I find them again with all their vigor "and activity."

The Empress, according to her custom, which she never varied, having then given audience to the clergy, the authorities and the traders, invited all the nobility to a party followed by a magnificent ball and re-embarked on board her galley.

Though the river now became wider, yet the difficulties of our navigation increased. From the wind's being unfavorable or dying away, we frequently ran foul of the islands and sand-banks; and sometimes we were obliged to remain at anchor for twenty-four hours successively.

But the appearance of lands hitherto unknown to us, the satisfaction of passing through a country lately inhabited by Zaporavian Cossacks, destructive robbers, the enemies of all agricultural and industrious pursuits, but now occupied by an obedient and laborious people; and the convenience and accommodations of our vessels as well as the delights of reading and conversation, made the

time appear short to us, and almost changed these slight accidents of so long a voyage into the mere pleasures of variety.

The Empress, indeed, seemed so well pleased with herself and with us, that she said she should have regretted that our voyage was so near its end, had she not been apprehensive of keeping the Emperor waiting, information having been received of his arrival at Kherson.

The Prince de Ligne, twenty years older than myself, incessantly astonished me by the liveliness of his imagination and the youthfulness of his mind. Early in the morning, he awakened me by knocking against the thin partition between his bed and mine, to repeat to me verses and songs which he had just composed; and a short time afterwards, his attendant brought me a letter of four or six pages, where wisdom, folly, politics, gallantry, military anecdotes and philosophic epigrams were mixed up together in a manner perfectly original.

He required at the same time a speedy answer; and never was a correspondence carried on with greater regularity and exactness, than this daily interchange of letters between an Austrian General and a French ambassador, sleeping alongside of each other in the same galley, not far from the Empress of the North, and sailing on the Borysthenes, through the country of the Cossacks, to visit that of the Tartars.

A thousand different amusements, the curious

and striking narrations of Catherine, the intellectual, although rather melancholy reflections of Mr. Fitz-Herbert, the whimsicalities of the Grand Equerry, and the inexhaustible gaiety of Cobentzel, who made us play with him at proverbs, in which he excelled, in the bed-chamber of the Empress, gave an agreeable variety to the passing hours.

The rocks and impediments, however, multiplying more and more, the uneasiness of the Empress might have changed into ill-temper, had we not learned that the Emperor the day after his arrival at Kherson had set out with speed for Kaydak, which was only six leagues from us.

The design of this monarch had been to come and meet the galley of the Empress; but Prince Potemkin, who had before arrived at Kaydak, having informed his sovereign in time, she disembarked, left us almost all on board, got into a carriage and hastened to meet the Emperor, whom she fell in with near the solitary house of a Cossack; there they stayed a few hours and then set out together for Kaydak, where we rejoined them the following morning, the 19th of May.

As the Empress had been in such a hurry as not to take any of her attendants with her, there was no inconsiderable difficulty in getting dinner for the two great sovereigns. Prince Potemkin, General Branitski and the Prince of Nassau whom the latter had conveyed in his carriage to Kaydak, at length prepared a repast which was

partaken of with much gaiety, but was as detestable as might have been expected from such noble cooks.

We remained at Kaydak the whole of the 19th, awaiting the arrival, not of all our fleet, for many of the vessels had run hard and fast aground, but at least of those which carried the men and things which were indispensable for the continuation of the journey.

On the 20th, we encamped two leagues off, under two tents, at the place where the Empress intended to build Ekaterinoslaff. Mass was performed in the imperial tent; their Majesties, in the presence of the Archbishop, laid the foundation-stone of the church of that new capital, the situation of which is extremely pleasant. It is upon a height from which you behold the long windings of the Borysthenes, and the woody islands which embellish that part of its course.

We afterwards dined at the country-house of the governor of the province; it was situated on the bank of the river, and opposite to the most celebrated of the cataracts, which, for a great length of time, have caused this passage to be considered as altogether impracticable for the purposes of commerce.

In fact, the Borysthenes at this place has chains of rocks of various heights across it, by which a great many falls and cascades are occasioned. The water dashed forward with such fury, as almost to prevent us from hearing ourselves.

At the first view no one would imagine it possible for the lightest skiff, and the hardiest rowers to overcome such obstacles. However, a canoe and a good sized vessel were anchored at some distance, with orders to pass the barrier. Prince Potemkin, M. de Nassau and myself, were desirous to embark, but the Empress formally forbade it.

The vessels, being steered from the side on which we were, effected this perilous passage most happily, and with the rapidity of an arrow, but also with such violent motion as to induce the belief that they were every moment about to be dashed to pieces, or filled by the waves and foundered: the canoe especially, disappeared almost every instant.

We were informed, however, that when the waters were high, the passage was executed with less difficulty, by having recourse to the skill of some old Zaporaviens, who were accustomed to this dangerous navigation; and Prince Potemkin reposed so much confidence in their experience and in their promises, that he formed the design of making the whole fleet of galleys, in which we had come from Kioff to Kaydak, descend as far as Kherson.

On leaving Ekaterinoslaff, we entered upon what is called in Russia the *steppes*—vast and solitary meadows altogether destitute of trees, and varied only at great intervals by hillocks quite bare, with some paltry rivulets winding at their feet. We often traversed seven or eight leagues

without encountering a man, a house, or a bush.

Africa has its deserts of sand; those of the East are less barren, they are the deserts of verdure. Immense flocks of sheep and a numerous breed of horses, alone inhabit these profound solitudes, where they are left to rove about the whole of the year.

At the first view this immense and verdant horizon, where nothing checks the sight, produces on the mind the same impression as the ocean: it seems to give greater grandeur to the imagination, and greater depth to reflection; but, in proportion as you advance, the uniformity occasions weariness; you become excessively tired of continually beholding above and around, nothing but the sky and green fields, which have no limits.

There was no change or variety to attract our attention, but a number of eminences which appeared to have been raised by human hands; and respecting which, opinion had been for a long time divided. One party imagined them to have been ancient sepulchres, and another asserted that these mounds had been formed by the Scythians and the Tartars, in order that they might gain intelligence from the greatest distance of those enemies, who might be desirous of surprising them. The truth of the first of these two opinions, has since, however, been definitively proved.

The whole face of the country which stretches, in Europe, from the Bug as far as Azoff, and in

Asia, from the Caucasus, as far as the frontiers of China, is but an immense sea of verdure.

The part of these *steppes* where we were, and upon which civilisation had endeavoured to spread its conquests and its works, might be compared with a plain canvass, upon which a painter had began to make a great picture, by introducing some hamlets, groves, and cultivated fields; but the work advancing slowly, will still present, even during more than a century, all the appearance of a desert.

The evening before our arrival at Kherson, we passed by a bridge, over the little river Kaminka, which, in other times, served to mark the boundaries of the Nogay-Tartars and the Cossacks.

Perhaps having traversed a desert of a hundred leagues, increased the surprise and heightened the gratification which we experienced on beholding Kherson. However, I think, that, independently of the disposition to which our minds might have been brought, it would have been impossible not to have been astonished at seeing so many new and imposing creations: a fortress almost completed; barracks for twenty-four thousand men; a dock-yard with all its appointments; an arsenal furnished with six hundred pieces of cannon; two vessels of war, and a frigate ready to be launched; public edifices which were rising up on all sides at the same time; many churches of noble architecture; in short, a city already flourishing, which contained two thousand houses, shops filled with merchandise brought from Greece,

Constantinople, and France, and about two hundred merchant vessels, which anchored or touched at the port.

If to these circumstances be added the bustle of eighteen thousand labourers; great military pomp, and a concourse of ministers, consuls, and travellers, it will easily be understood how such a spectacle, in a country which Russia had conquered only at the peace of Kainardgi, which it had not, properly speaking, occupied more than six years, and which had been relieved from the neighbourhood of the Tartars for only three years, would exalt the pride of the Empress, and justify the surprise of those who followed her, and the praises which they bestowed on the talent as well as on the activity of Prince Potemkin.

It is true that this first feeling of astonishment was very soon interrupted by reflections which moderated our admiration. On examining Kherson a little nearer and more in detail, it could not but be remarked that its position was badly chosen. Unloaded vessels only can proceed up the Dnieper, while the men of war which are built there, are obliged, in order to descend the river, to be lightened by the assistance of *chameaux**.

No quays had been constructed, nor any com-

* *Chameaux* are large long vessels, with square sides and bottoms, which lashed two and two with cables, serve to sustain a vessel in places where there is not sufficient water for her.

mercial store-houses; the tribunals, badly organised, administered justice slowly and imperfectly; and finally, the infection from the morasses and the islands covered with reed, which encompass the city, make it an unhealthy and frequently a mortal residence to its inhabitants.

I did not conceal these observations, which I had collected from many merchants, from Prince Potemkin. He had felt and acknowledged all these inconveniences. In order to remedy them, he proposed to form a merchant port thirty wersts lower down the river, to establish strict quarantaine laws, to build quays and store-houses, to establish a consular jurisdiction, and finally to drain the adjoining marshes.

He had already applied for and obtained the money necessary for the greater part of these operations. That of draining appeared to me impossible; moreover it could not be effected without the destruction and loss of the rushes, which were the only fuel and the only covering of almost all the houses in a place, where, for a hundred leagues round, no wood was to be found.

The first days of our residence in Kherson were employed in traversing the city, in grand audiences, in repasts of one hundred and twenty covers, in concerts and in balls. One day the Empress invited us to dine at a country house four leagues from Kherson. The next day we saw launched, in her presence, an eighty- gun ship, a sixty-six-gun ship, and a frigate. The day following, a ball was given at court, in a palace which had been

built for the Empress with more elegance than solidity.

The Empress had formed the project of going to Kilburn, opposite to Oczakoff; but that military reconnoitring of the Turkish territory, which savoured rather too strongly of bravado, could not take place. The arrival of an Ottoman squadron, composed of four vessels of the line, and of ten frigates, which anchored in the Liman near to Oczakoff, frustrated the design of Catherine, but she did not renounce it without very evident vexation. There being nothing which could any longer delay us, we set out for the Crimea, following the two august chiefs of our caravan.

Before quitting Kherson, however, it is proper to speak of some intelligence that we received there, of the progress of important affairs, which were then treated of at Constantinople: the unlooked for arrival of the Turkish squadron at the mouth of the Borysthenes, and that of many military Frenchmen at Oczakoff, had produced a discontent among the ministers of Catherine and throughout her Court, which amounted almost to indignation.

"How is it to be accounted for?" they asked, "that, at the moment when we have signed a "treaty of friendship, and even at the instant "when the Empress is accompanied by a minis- "ter of France, and is loading him with distinction "and with marks of confidence, we behold French "engineers employed in directing the works, ar-

" tillery, vessels, and warlike preparations of our " enemies?"

Prince Potemkin frequently spoke to me of these alleged grievances with bitterness and animation, reproaching me with having, by an unnecessary alarm, excited the Turks to adopt menacing measures, which might provoke a war.

If I had wished to use finesse, to feign ignorance of what I knew, and to censure what I had advised, I should not, by so doing, have allayed the anger which was evinced, while I should have forfeited that respect which can be preserved only by a noble frankness.

I replied therefore, not to the courtier, but to the minister, " that the Turks had cause to be " dissatisfied; that the conduct of M. de Bulgakoff " towards M. de Choiseul, had rendered it im- " possible for us to pacify them." I even added, " that we had thought it right to counsel, to ap- " prove, and to second the defensive preparations " of the Porte.

" Our proceeding," said I, " is open and consis- " tent; we have always declared to you, that the " more the King shewed himself eager to redress " the grievances of which Russia might have to " complain, the more his Majesty, moved by im- " portant interests, was determined, as far as it de- " pended on him, to watch over the preservation " of the Ottoman empire."

" Notwithstanding your pacific protestations," I continued, " which I love to believe sincere, " who can be astonished at the precautions which

" have been dictated by the prudence of the Porte?
" Place yourself in its situation: if the Grand
" Seignior came to Oczakoff with his viziers, a
" powerful ally, a formidable fleet, and an army
" of a hundred and fifty thousand men, could any
" one express astonishment or blame you, if you
" then shewed some alarm, took precautions for
" your own safety, and resolved on the wise plan
" of fortifying Kherson and of assembling your
" troops?"

The argument was unanswerable, and the Prince made no reply. The openness of my language met with a success which could never have been obtained by clumsy dissimulation; and the coldness with which the Empress had treated me for some days disappeared by degrees.

The firmness of the Turks produced a happy result; their weakness was no longer despised, and for the moment at least, the negociations were conducted more amicably.

I had seen at Kanieff a King, without power and without authority, surrounded by all the magnificence and the splendour of the greatest monarchs; by a remarkable contrast, I saw at Kherson a powerful Emperor, simple in his habits, modest in his manners, familiar in his address, an enemy to all etiquette, encouraging and even provoking conversation upon all subjects, and unwilling to shine by means of any other advantages than those which were conferred on him by a comprehensive education, a solid judgement and a cultivated mind.

When Catherine the Second wished to present me to him at Kaydak, he said: " Madam, I am " only the Count de Falkenstein, and it is I who " ought to be presented to the minister of France."

This Prince arrived in Russia in a simple calash, accompanied by a general officer, and two domestics. The strict *incognito* which he observed, was as convenient to him as it was useful in enabling him to see and hear with greater advantage; and he therefore positively desired that he should be treated as a traveller and not as a monarch.

Every morning he awaited the rising of the Empress, associated with us, and continued with us in attendance until that Princess appeared. During the day he went over all the environs of the place where we were stopping; and, as fortune directed that my conversation should please him, he often gave me his arm familiarly and took long walks with me alone.

In his conversation, this Prince shewed me that he was little disposed to second the ambition of Catherine. The policy of the King on this point, seemed to him, extremely wise. " Con- " stantinople," said he, " will ever be an object of " jealousy and a ground for discord, which will " always render it impossible for the great powers " to agree in a division of Turkey."

I found him very little struck with the progress of the Russian establishments. " I find," said he, " more of show than of reality. Prince " Potemkin is active, but more fit to begin great

" works than to finish them. As to the rest, all " becomes easy if we are prodigal of wealth and " of human life. We could not venture in " Germany nor in France upon what is hazarded " here without opposition. The master com- " mands; and troops of slaves obediently labour. " They are paid little or nothing; they are badly " fed; they dare not let a murmur escape them, " and I know that, during three years, in these " new governments, fatigue and the unhealthiness " of the morasses, have destroyed fifty thousand " men without its being complained of, or even " alluded to."

Another day, our conversation turned upon Prince Potemkin: " I understand," he said to me, " that notwithstanding his eccentricities, " that singular man has acquired and preserved " a great ascendancy over the Empress. He has " a strong mind, and a lively imagination, and has " rendered himself not only useful but necessary; " for you know the Russians, and you will agree " that it would be difficult to find another man " among them, capable of bridling and restrain- " ing a people as yet so rude, so recently in " contact with civilisation, and a court but too " accustomed to conspiracies."

The more M. de Cobentzel saw me honored with the favor of the Emperor, the more intimate and confidential he became towards me; but even while he was assuring me of the sincerity of the steps which were prescribed to him in order to second mine relative to peace, he ap-

peared to fear that the Emperor would finally, allow himself to be dragged into war, if the Empress, bounding her pretensions to the capture of Oczakoff and Akerman, should entirely satisfy him upon every other point of aggrandizement.

" However," added he, " he would not agree, " without extreme repugnance, from the appre- " hension that a rupture with Prussia and a fresh " disagreement with France could not but be the " result of such a concession to his ally."

In the meanwhile, M. de Bulgakoff, minister of the Empress, and M. de Herbert, internuncio of the Emperor, having arrived from Constantinople, some conferences were opened between them, Count Bezborodko and myself.

They told me, " affairs became more and " more perplexed: the populace of Candia had " given themselves up to violent excesses against " the Russian consul there, and after having " torn down his flag, had compelled him to aban- " don his house, and to take refuge in that of " the French consul. The disturbance had also " spread as far as Rhodes, and, in consequence " of a commotion, the Russian consul had lost " his life."

It was determined, with the approbation of the Empress, that we should reduce to writing some propositions, the bases of which we had agreed upon.

M. de Bulgakoff, after having followed us as far as Sevastopol, was to embark and present these propositions to the Porte, having previously

communicated them to our ambassador, the internuncio being already in possession of them, and to act in concert with them.

Count Bezborodko assured me that he had sharply reproved M. de Bulgakoff for his conduct with respect to M. de Choiseul; conduct which he could not but consider as the source of all the alarm with which the Turks were inspired. As this minister held the same language as the Count Cobentzel I could not doubt his sincerity.

The bases of the propositions resolved on between us, and in conformity with preceding treatises were these: *That the Porte should send the firman agreed upon; that both parties should reciprocally maintain silence on the sovereignty of Georgia; that the Porte should compel the Algerines to restore the Russian vessels taken by them; that Russia should be permitted to chastise the Tartars of Kuban, who had made nearly a thousand Russian prisoners; that the Porte should keep on the other side of the Bug the Zaporavians who had retired into its territories; that it should henceforward take the quantity of salt in the Crimea which was agreed for; that it should no longer insist upon the demand it had made of having the hospodar Maurocordato, a refugee in Russia delivered up; finally, that it should punish the rioters, who had insulted the consuls of the Empress in the isles of Rhodes and Candia.*

These propositions were all reasonable, and yet in a case where parties are not sincere, nothing is more easy than to bring about a refusal;

it was only necessary to present them in a haughty and menacing tone. Prince Potemkin might be tempted to some such measure, seeing himself at the head of an effective army, composed of full one hundred and fifty-three thousand men, cantoned at Krementchuk, at Kherson, at Elisabethgorod, at Pultawa, and in the towns of the Crimea.

A new incident happened to strengthen the hope of preserving peace. The Emperor received some troublesome intelligence from the Netherlands, where a considerable fermentation had manifested itself. These new troubles would naturally divert him from any intention of co-operating with the Empress if she wished to attack the Turks.

At this time, an Envoy came from Naples to Kherson, under the pretext of bringing assurances to the Empress of the amicable disposition of his court; the real object of the mission of M. de Gallo, was to examine the establishments at Kherson, in order to be assured of the best measures which could be adopted in arranging the new treaty of commerce, which the King of Naples was about to conclude with Russia.

We left Kherson on the 29th of May, to proceed to Kisikerman, situated on the right hand shore of the Borysthenes, at a distance of seventy-five wersts to the north-east from Kherson. This little town formerly belonged to the Nogay-Tartars, and forms at present a part of new Russia.

The Greeks, who founded it, called it at first Olviopol; the Czars gave it the name of Belaia-veja, afterwards Berislaff, and the Tartars called it Kisikerman, which means in their language *city of daughters*. It was by turns the prey of the Kozars, the Petscheneques and the Tartars.

The salt marshes and the petrifactions which are found in abundance in the plain that surrounds it, afford reason to believe, that at one time, this territory was covered by water.

At that place we crossed the Borysthenes. On disembarking on the opposite side, the Empress found a troop of Tartars of the most distinguished families, who had assembled to render homage and to serve as an escort to her. Thence, in order to arrive at Perekop, we traversed the great desert of the Nogays. In that immense meadow, which is entirely destitute of trees, we perceived but a single vestige of the labour of man; it was an antique bridge of white stones, built over the little river Kalentchak.

The Tartars, like the Arabians, were divided into tribes, one race of whom inhabited the towns of the Crimea, and the others, always wandering, traversed the Steppes with their numerous flocks.

When their country was conquered by the Empress, the greater part of these erratic people abandoned their fields, and took refuge in Kuban; we saw therefore but a small number of them; but their tents, horses, flocks, and some camels still gave a little life to that uniform landscape.

Here the Prince Potemkin who loved to be per-

petually struggling against obstacles, and delighted in giving variety to the grand pictures which he presented to the view of Catherine, and in animating even solitude itself, had taken care to collect around a camp formed of very elegant and richly furnished tents, which he had prepared for his sovereign, a body of fifty squadrons of the cossacks of the Don, who made their appearance quite unexpectedly.

Their Asiatic and picturesque costumes, the celerity of their manœuvres, the agility of their horses, their charges, their shouts, their lances, made us for a moment forget the steppes, and enabled us to pass some hours agreeably, which otherwise it would have been difficult not to have thought long and wearisome.

It was in this place that the Empress, again displeased with me, and after not having spoken to me for some days, resumed her former kindness. Some obliging courtiers had assured her, that, being in a great hurry to leave her, I longed to return to France, and to avail myself of a leave of absence which M. de Montmorin had sent me.

Accordingly, on getting into her carriage at Kisikerman, she said to me, without waiting for an answer : " Why do you constrain yourself M. " le Comte ? If you fear the tediousness of the " deserts, what prevents you from departing for " Paris, where so many pleasures await you ?"

It will easily be conceived that I was anxious to obtain some explanation of an interrogation so extraordinary and so unexpected ; as soon there-

fore as she was encamped, and was to be seen, I approached her, and requested to know the meaning of a pleasantry, which I could not at all understand.

"It was no pleasantry" she replied. "I had "frequently told you so before; I was sure that "your fine ladies in Paris would censure you for "travelling fifteen hundred leagues in a barbarous "country, and in the midst of a desert, with a "tiresome Czarina. And on learning that you "had asked permission to return, I wished, what-"ever vexation your departure might cause me, "to put you quite at your ease on the subject."

I protested earnestly against this strange idea of me and of the sentiments I entertained towards her. "It is at once, Madam," I said, "to pro-"nounce me blind, ungrateful, without discern-"ment and without taste. I venture even to add "that I see with concern in this, some remaining "prejudice against the French which they do not "merit. In no part of the world are you more "appreciated or more admired than in France, "and in that point I represent my country before "you most faithfully. It will be with unfeigned "regret, that immediately upon your Majesty's "return to St. Petersburgh I shall take my de-"parture for a short time from your court. Your "Majesty must banish me, to make me set out "sooner."

"I have no such inclination," said she laughing. "I could wish that you should remain with me "always, and you know it well. If I was a little

" angry with you at the visit which was recently " made me by your bearded Turks, your goodly " disciples, that fit of ill temper has entirely passed " away."

She afterwards spoke to me on the propositions which were to be made to the Porte. " The King " will see," said she, " by my concessions, that " my wish for peace is sincere, and that I am not " quite so ambitious as he is pleased to imagine." From that moment she received me with all her accustomed graciousness and gaiety.

In the evening, when the Empress had dismissed her court, the Emperor being desirous of profiting by the beauty of the evening, took my arm, left the camp, and took a long walk upon the immense meadows, whose boundary the eye could not trace.

At the sight of some camels and of some Tartar shepherds wandering on the plain : " What a sin- " gular journey," exclaimed the Prince, " and " who would have dreamt of seeing me with Cathe- " rine the Second and the ministers of France and " England, wandering in the desert of the Tartars! " It is altogether a new page in history."

" It appears to me," I replied, " rather like a " page from the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, " and that I am walking with the Caliph Haroun- " al-Raschild, who, according to his custom, is " disguised."

A few minutes afterwards, the Emperor stopped suddenly, and rubbed his eyes. " In truth," he said, " I do not know whether I am awake, or

" whether your allusion to the Arabian Nights " Entertainments has enchanted me, but look on " this side."

I turned my head, and was struck with astonishment by the same object which had excited his surprise. In fact, at about two hundred paces from us, we beheld a large, high, and immense tent, which was proceeding along the grass altogether by itself.

Notwithstanding the height of the grass, both of us ran swiftly in order that we might the better distinguish this singular phenomenon. The tent soon stopped, and we saw a body of thirty Kalmouks come out of it.

The Emperor desired me to enter, and having jokingly made some signs to the Kalmouks, they followed me, and lowered the covering which closed the entrance to the tent, so that I found myself their prisoner.

The whole thing was then explained to me. These tents are constructed in this manner: with laths they make a kind of trellis-work, of which they form a circular railing four feet high, surmounted or crowned by a circle of wood, which makes a species of wainscot about breast high. Upon this wainscot, great laths, of thirty feet in length are raised; at their summit, a little circle of wood hinders them from falling together, and all these laths are secured by fastenings of leather.

An immense covering, composed of camel hair, is thrown over the whole, and it descends as far as the ground. They raise up parts of this co-

vering on the side from which they have no fear either of the wind or the sun. In the tent there are other coverings made of the same material, which serve for beds and sofas. At the top there is an opening which answers for a chimney. Thirty men can live conveniently in each of these tents, and the flocks feed around them.

When they decamp, they take off the covering, remove the fastenings, pack all the laths in bundles, and place the whole upon a waggon. But, when they wish merely to change their situation a little in order to give fresh pasturage, then, without at all discomposing the tent, the Kalmouks, who are inside, turn all in the same direction, lift up the railing, and so march away with their light dwelling.

It was exactly this manœuvre which had caused our great surprise, when we saw the tent moving apparently without being either carried or drawn by any man or animal.

When they had thus made me take a short walk of some paces with them, I recovered my liberty and found the Emperor, who laughed heartily at my imprisonment. He himself went into the tent, and agreed with me in thinking that, for those who were accustomed to it, such a dwelling was convenient and extremely well calculated to shelter them from the rigour of all seasons.

The next day we arrived at Perekop, a narrow isthmus which separates the Black Sea from the Sea of Azoff. A wall and a moat extend from

one sea to the other. There is a square stone fort, and a village composed of some barracks. Perekop is the entrance, the door and the key, to the peninsula of the Crimea, to which the triumphant Empress was about to restore its ancient name of Tauris.

The peninsula of the Crimea is bounded on the East by the Sea of Azoff, on the South and on the West by the Black Sea, and on the North by the desert plains of ancient Scythia. It extends from longitude 51°. to 53°. and from latitude 44°. to 46°.

The flat part of this peninsula, notwithstanding the fertility of its soil, was, when I visited it, almost as much deserted as the steppes of the Nogays. Immense flocks were feeding in these vast pasturages; in the course of our route, at great distances, we observed some hamlets and fields which were begun to be cultivated.

The mountainous and southern part, which commences after you have crossed the river Salguire, presents an entirely different scene; there, the air is healthy, the sky is clear, nature is fertile, and the grandeur of the hills, some of which have an elevation of eighteen hundred feet, is imposing.

The numerous vallies which separate them, are rich with flowers, fruits, wood, streams, cascades and cultivation. Thick, bushy trees of all descriptions, pleasant groves, laurels, vines which twine around the trunks of shrubs, and pleasure-houses surrounded by beautiful gardens, all combine to

present travellers with a thousand varied and delicious scenes.

On the other side of the mountains we experienced the heat of the climate of Naples and of Venice, but as long as we were to the north and in the plain, no height intervening to check the wind from the Baltic as far as the Euxine Sea, that is for a space of eight hundred leagues, we were exposed to all the rigours of the frozen zone. Even the mouth of the Borysthenes is sometimes frozen up, so that, as far as the mountains, the climate of Russia prevails, but pass them and in a few hours you are under that of Italy.

All parts of the coast present good ports and a safe roadstead for shipping; and when the extent of Tauris is considered, with the variety of its productions, and all the means of defence which nature has so prodigally bestowed upon it, it is very easy to understand why its possession should have been disputed during so many ages, and by so many people.

The Kimeres or Kimbres, who gave their name to the Kimerian or Cimmerian Bosphorus, are the most ancient people in whose possession it is known to have been.

Then the Scythians conquered the plains, but they were unable to make themselves masters of the mountains. The Kimerians maintained themselves and for a long period under the name of Tauri, and it was that which caused the peninsula to be called Tauris.

Commerce carried the Greeks to it, and, six

hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Milesians established the colony of Panticapœum on the eastern side, in the places where Kertch and Theodosia are at this time.

The Heraclians of Pontus founded, on the western side, the ancient Kherson or Eupatoria. The Greeks of Mitylene founded in the North-East, in Bosphorus and near the mouth of the Kuban, a kingdom which was rendered flourishing by a Prince named Spartake. He was the ally of the Athenians, and drove the Scythians from the peninsula.

Four hundred years before Jesus Christ, the Tauri who remained in the country having increased, gave battle to the Greeks and expelled them from the greater part of their possessions. But, one hundred and twelve years before the christian era, the celebrated Mithridates, King of Pontus, subjected the whole of those nations and conquered Tauris.

That hero, vanquished by the Romans, left the wreck of his power to Pharnaces, his unworthy successor, who was unable to resist his enemies, to govern his people, or to preserve those countries which had not been surrendered to the Romans. It was then that that people appeared, for the first time, in Tauris.

The Alani or Alains, a barbarous people, invaded and totally drove away the Tauri.

In the second century of the christian era, the Goths took forcible possession of the country, and were themselves subjugated by the Ongres

or Huns, who completed the destruction of the kingdom of Bosphorus.

In the seventh century, the Kozars, in their turn, thrust out the Greeks. In 640, Theophilus, Emperor of Greece, added Chersonesus to his empire, as well as all the Greek towns and colonies of which any remains could be found in Tauris, but they were obliged to pay tribute to the Kozars.

After that, divers barbarous people, the Comans, the Petscheneques and the Polotzvisians, desolated this country by their invasions, and finally, the Tartars became the sovereigns of Tauris, in the thirteenth century, and called it Krim or *Fortress.*

Their wandering tribes occupied the great desert, while Menguely-Guerray, at the head of the stationary tribes, laid the foundation of the kingdom of the Khans of Crimea. They resided in a town which is called to this day Star-Krim, or *the Old Fortress.*

The Greeks and the Goths established in the Crimea, remained there tributaries to the Tartars. They and the Venetians carried on considerable commerce there, but the Genoese, favored by the Emperor Michael Paleologus, took the place from them, and, after many sanguinary victories, became so powerful that they freed themselves from the tribute which they had paid to the Tartars.

Caffa, Soudak and Balaclava, were the centre and the dépôts of these immense riches. Caffa or Theodosia, above all, was famous in the East

for its population and its opulence; but, at the end of the fifteenth century, the Tartars, who had long been weakened by their internal divisions, united, and, with the assistance of the Turks, annihilated the power of the Genoese.

The Turks did not long delay making themselves masters of the Crimea; and there, as every where else, their sway covered the country with ruins, banished commerce, annihilated agriculture, and plunged that unhappy country into bonds more debasing than those which fettered it in the time of the Scythians and the Tauri.

In 1478, Mahomet II nominated Menguely-Guerray, a descendant from Gengis, Khan of the Crimea. The princes or khans of that race, although almost independent in fact, remained, nevertheless, still vassals to the Grand Seignior.

Selim-Guerray, the nineteenth Khan, was celebrated for his valour; he fought the Austrians, the Poles and the Russians, and rescued the standard of Mahomet. The Janissaries invited him to ascend the throne of Constantinople, but he refused.

It was in 1763 that the Russians, under the command of Marshal Munich, entered the Crimea for the first time and devastated it.

Alym-Guerray, odious to his subjects, was dethroned in 1757 by the Nogays, and he nominated Krim-Guerray as Khan, who was remarkable for his virtues and for his talents.

In 1764, Krim-Guerray marched fifty thousand Tartars against the Russians, and ravaged

New-Servia. He was poisoned at Bender by a perfidious physician.

In 1771, Prince Dolgorouki and the Russians, after having invaded the Crimea, conferred the title of Khan on Saheb-Guerray. That Prince ceded the towns of Kertch and Kilburn to the Empress, and soon afterwards the Turks re-established the deposed Khan.

After many engagements, the brother of Saheb, sustained by the Russians, reconquered the Peninsula, which, nevertheless, continued to be a prey to civil wars, which the Russians prolonged by their interference.

In 1779, France procured the evacuation of the Crimea by the Russian army, and the Khan was obliged to have his election confirmed by the Grand Seignior.

The internal dissensions, however, continuing, and Khan Sahim-Guerray finding his ports blockaded by Russian vessels, and himself without any defence, and menaced by an army commanded by Prince Potemkin, he descended from the throne, and ceded to Catherine the Second, the Crimea, Kuban and the Isle of Taman. The Porte, abandoned by the Emperor of Austria and the King of France, was forced to give its consent.

That important revolution, which, in dethroning the last sovereign of the race of Gengis-Khan, gave to Russia the possession of the Black Sea, and thereby enabled her to form plans against the capital of the Ottoman empire, produced, at the time, but a slight impression in Europe.

Catherine, therefore, perfectly victorious, could, in accordance with her wishes, enter in triumph into ancient Tauris, and seat herself upon the throne of those Tartar princes, whose ancestors had so often compelled the czars of Russia to present their servile homage to the insolent chiefs of the *Golden Horde*.

On the 30th of June, we crossed the famous lines of Perekop, which, notwithstanding the strength of their position and the depth of their moats, never having been able to arrest the march of any one enemy, are now a mere object of curiosity; we afterwards visited the fortress of Or, with which they are connected.

As we quitted it, we beheld a numerous body of Tartar cavalry, richly clothed and armed, who appeared before the Empress in the character of guard of honor. That Princess, whose ideas were all grand, elevated and bold, had come to the resolution that, during her sojourn in the Crimea, her escort should always be composed of Tartars, of men disdainful of her sex, constant enemies to christians, and recently subjugated by her. As is generally the case with boldness, so unexpected a proof of confidence was successful.

"How say you, my dear Segur," said the Prince de Ligne, to me, laughing, "would it not "be a strange event, one that would make a "great noise in Europe, if these twelve hundred "Tartars who now surround us, should take it "into their heads to conduct us to some little "neighbouring port, there to embark the august

" Catherine, together with the powerful Empe-
" ror of the Romans, Joseph II, and thence to
" steer them to Constantinople, for the amuse-
" ment and satisfaction of his Highness Abdul-
" Hamet, sovereign lord of the faithful? Nor
" would there be any thing absolutely blamable
" in such a trick, for they might well and with-
" out any scruple, scamper away with a couple
" of Sovereigns who came, in defiance of the
" rights of men and of all treaties, to seize upon
" their country, to dethrone their princes and de-
" stroy their independence." Fortunately, this project did not enter the heads of the loyal children of Mahomet.

Under their conduct, we continued our route with great tranquillity, and halted to pass the night at a place called Aïbar, where they had pitched a camp for us, and built a tolerably elegant house for the Empress.

Mr. Fitz-Herbert and I were lodged in one of those Tartar tents of which I have already given a description. The Russians were astonished at beholding an English and a French minister, in spite of the rivalry of their two countries and the opposition of their interests, united in the most sincere friendship: it would have been impossible to blame the one, without the other's taking up his defence.

The Empress was amused with so extraordinary a friendship, and she, doubtless took occasion to heighten her diversion, by arranging, that we should sleep in the same tent, and

write upon the same table, despatches of perfectly opposite characters.

On the 31st, having crossed the Salguire, and at length, quitting the desert plains, we approached the chain of mountains, and enjoyed deliciously in the vallies, the pleasure of again seeing shady places, picturesque hillocks, fine houses, laborious active peasants, in short, all the reality of life, which we had almost lost sight of in traversing the uncultivated and solitary steppes.

In the evening we arrived at the city of Bachtchi-Saraï, and the whole of the court took up its residence in the palace of the ancient Khans.

Bachtchi-Saraï is situated in an extremely narrow valley or rather in a defile upon the river Tschourouk. It was founded in the sixteenth century by the Tartars; the houses, which are but poorly built, rise in an amphitheatre, on the sides of very high hills which closely encompass them, and whose immense rocks seem, at every instant, ready to overwhelm them: this forms one of the most singular views which can excite the curiosity of a traveller.

When at the threshold of success, our prospects are sometimes thwarted, and that was precisely what was likely to have been the case with the Empress, at the moment, when seeing the minarets of Bachtchi-Saraï, she anticipated with proud delight, the pleasure of seating herself upon a Musulman throne, conquered by her arms.

You enter or rather descend into Bachtchi-Saraï, by an extremely sharp declivity, beset with rocks on both sides. Catherine's carriage was ponderous, and the horses which drew it spirited and untractable; these fiery animals, pressed upon by an unusual burthen, started off, seized the bit between their teeth, and precipitated themselves among the rocks with so much impetuosity, that we expected every moment to see the carriage overturned and dashed to atoms.

The efforts of the Tartars to check their progress were in vain; terror seized upon all the travellers, and Catherine alone, (as the Emperor afterwards informed me) did not exhibit by her countenance, the slightest symptom of fear. At length, after having passed, nobody knew how, over some of the rocks without any accident, fate directed that the horses should stop of their own accord at the beginning of a street, and this they did so abruptly that many of them fell. The carriage, at this last violent check, ran upon their bodies and would have been overturned, but for the assistance of the Tartar horsemen who held it up by main force.

Bachtchi-Saraï, though it had lost great part of its population since the conquest, still contained nine thousand inhabitants, almost all Musulmans. The policy of Catherine restrained neither their commerce nor their religion. She let them follow all their established usages, so that we might have supposed ourselves really in the midst of a town in Turkey or Persia; with

this difference only, that we had leisure to examine every thing without having to fear any of the humiliations which christians are forced to undergo throughout the East.

What astonished me most at first, were the phlegm, the pride and the apathy, real or affected of the Turkish and Tartar merchants. Old and young, these Turks and Tartars seated quietly before the doors of their houses, or in the insides of their shops, far from showing any surprise, any curiosity, or any emotion indicative of pleasure or displeasure, on the approach of a cavalcade so new to them, and presenting so much pomp to their view, remained motionless, without rising, and without directing their eyes towards us. Sometimes, indeed, they even turned their backs upon us.

These fanatics, believing always that they possess a great superiority over us, whom they regard as *infidels* and *dogs*, preserve their stupid pride, even when they are conquered; and far from being humbled, never impute their reverses to their ignorance. They always attribute them to fatality alone.

We were told that the palace of the Khan, now become ours, had been constructed on a smaller scale according to the model of the seraglio at Constantinople. This palace is near the river, on the back of which the Tartars have constructed a quay; you arrive at it by a little bridge of stone, and the entrance is through a court-yard.

On the left is the grand mosque of the Khan;

farther on, are the stables; on the right is the palace of the seraglio. It is but one story high, and is composed of several buildings of unequal height. A garden, divided into four terraces, surrounds it.

Near the mosque is the cemetery where the Khans, the Mirzas or Grandees and the Priests were interred. These places, consecrated to the dead are very picturesque in the East, from the various forms of the tombs and the beauty of the trees which overshadow them.

Their imperial Majesties occupied the apartments of the Sultan. Fitz-Herbert, Cobentzel, the Prince de Ligne and I, were lodged in the chambers of the Sultanas which looked out upon pretty gardens; surrounded, certainly, by very high walls.

Each apartment was furnished only with a large and commodious sofa which went all round it. In the middle of the room was a large square basin of white marble, from pipes in the centre of which there gushed forth spouts of fresh and limpid water.

There was but a feeble light in the apartment; the glasses of the windows were covered with pictures, and even when they were open the rays of the sun, could scarcely find a passage through the branches of rose-trees, laurels, jasmins, pomegranates, and orange trees which overspread the windows and served as a sort of blind.

I remember that having lain down on my sofa, overcome by the extreme heat, and enjoying the murmuring of the water, the freshness of the

shade and the fragrance of the flowers, I gave myself up to oriental luxury, and was enjoying all the inactivity of a true Pacha, when on a sudden I saw a little old man, in a long robe, appear before me, with a white beard and wearing a red cap on his bald head.

His aspect and his humble attitude rendered my illusion complete, and I was ready to believe myself some musulman prince whose sacred orders some aga or bostangi was come to receive.

As this slave spoke a little of the *lingua franca*, a sort of bad Italian, I learned from him that he had formerly been gardener to the Khan Sahim-Guerray. I took him for my guide and he conducted me through all the internal parts of this oriental palace which, from its irregularity and numerous turnings, it would be no easy matter to describe.

The subdued Mahometans could refuse us nothing; and we entered the mosque during the prayers. We there saw one of those spectacles which disgrace human reason. Thirty or forty fanatic dervises, whom the Arabs call *turners*, twirled themselves round and round with the rapidity of a top, with so much violence, crying out with all their might *allah-hou, allah-hou, allah-hou*, that they at last fell down on their faces, worn out and almost breathless.

It has been said, with justice, that if God made man in his own image, man has done the same thing in his conduct with regard to God, for almost

every where men have believed the deity or the gods, eccentric, unjust and cruel enough to receive ridiculous mummeries, extravagant mortifications, and, what is yet more horrible, sacrifices of human victims, as agreeable offerings.

At a quarter of a league from the city, there is a town situated on a hill peopled by Karaite jews, who are considered as amongst the most ancient inhabitants of this peninsula.

These Karaites were the only jews who, adhering to the law of Moses, did not believe in the Talmud.

At five wersts farther on, there is a hill standing by itself and very high; it has the form of a cone and is called Tiape-Kairmen. The rock of which it consists, contains three rows of caverns. The environs of Bachtchi-Sarai are studded with pretty country-houses which formerly belonged to the Tartar princes and their wives.

The Empress stayed only five days at Bachtchi-Sarai. The satisfaction she felt was expressed in her countenance; she felt proud as a sovereign, as a woman and as a christian of being seated on the throne of the Tartars, formerly the conquerors of Russia, and who, but a few years before their overthrow, had ravaged its provinces, disturbed its commerce, devastated its newly acquired dominions and rendered the possession of them uncertain.

We enjoyed, almost as much as she did, the novelty of a spectacle which afforded us an opportunity of seeing, without interruption and in

detail, the interior of those famous harems or which no christian can otherwise even know the general arrangement.

Immediately after the conquest the emigration of the Tartars was considerable; but the mildness of Catherine's government soon disarmed the hatred of these fierce Mussulmans and gained their confidence. Not only did fifty thousand of them resolve to remain in their own country, but many who had already set out, solicited permission to return, a permission which was granted with difficulty, as experience had shewn that they would never become good cultivators of the land.

On leaving Bachtchi-Sarai we passed through some agreeable valleys and crossed the Cabarta, which flows through a country so delightful that it may be compared to a succession of beautiful gardens. We arrived to dinner at Inkerman, formerly called Theodora by the Greeks and Actiar by the Tartars. There some lofty hills, in the form of a semi-circle, form a wide and deep gulf, on the shores of which were formerly built the ancient Kherson and the city of Eupatoria.

The sight of these coasts of Tauris, sacred to Hercules and to Diana, recalled to our remembrance the fables of Greece as well as the more historical associations connected with the kings of Bosphorus and the exploits of Mithridates.

During the repast of their Imperial Majesties, which was accompanied by harmonious music, the windows of the great balcony were suddenly opened and a most magnificent spectacle pre-

sented itself to our view. In the foreground was a body of Tartar horsemen formed in line; beyond them we saw a bay twelve wersts deep and four wide; in the middle of this bay, which terminated in a vast sea, a formidable fleet, built, armed and equipped in two years, was ranged in order of battle opposite the apartment where we were dining with the Empress.

This armament then fired a salute of all its cannon, the roar of which seemed to announce to the Euxine sea, that it had a ruler whose powerful arms could, in the space of thirty hours, make her flag wave on the walls of Constantinople

We embarked at the further end of the gulf. All the vessels of Catherine's fleet, passed in review before her, while she admired the large deep coves which nature seemed to have dug on each side of this harbour in order to make it the finest port in the known world.

After having thus run over the space of two leagues we disembarked at the foot of a mountain on which rises, in the form of an amphitheatre, the new Sevastopol, founded by Catherine. Several magazines, an admiralty, intrenchments, four hundred buildings in progress, a crowd of workmen, a strong garrison, two hospitals, several docks for careening, commerce, and quarantine, already gave to this newly created place the appearance of an important town.

It appeared to us quite incomprehensible how Prince Potemkin, at eight hundred leagues from

the capital, and in a country so recently conquered, could find means to form, in two years such an establishment, build a town, raise a fleet, make forts, and gather together so many inhabitants; it was indeed a prodigious display of activity.

We were expecting the immediate arrival of the three vessels launched in our presence at Kherson, and others from Taganrok. But, while waiting for them, we beheld, in the harbour, twenty-five ships of war, completely armed and ready to spread their sails as soon as Catherine should be pleased to give the signal.

The entrance to the gulf is safe, convenient, sheltered from the winds, and sufficiently narrow for the guns of the batteries placed on the two banks not only to cross each other but even to carry small shot from one side to the other.

It was natural to suppose that these extensive forces by land and sea would exalt the imagination, and enflame the ambition of the Empress. The flattering homage of her courtiers, the pride of seeing herself so near Byzantium, the warlike discourses of her favorite minister and the Princes de Ligne and Nassau might well have destroyed the desire for peace which Catherine had manifested.

Nevertheless, she still appeared to persist in it. The instructions, given at the end of the conferences at Kherson, were not changed, and M. de Bulgakoff embarked for Constantinople, with

orders to present to the Porte the conciliatory propositions which had been agreed on.

The Empress wished to know what I thought of her new maritime establishments. I replied: "Your Majesty has effaced the sad recollection "of the peace of Pruth. You have changed the "Zaporavian robbers into useful subjects, and "subdued the Tartars, the ancient oppressors of "Russia. In short, madam, by the creation of "Sevastopol, you have finished in the south, what "Peter the Great had commenced in the north. "There now remains no other conquest by which "to acquire glory than that of vanquishing na- "ture herself, by peopling and giving life to all "these new conquests and vast steppes which "we have just passed through."

In fact, there was nothing now that could prevent Catherine from peaceably enjoying this satisfaction, unless, instead of employing her mind in works of utility, she attempted fresh conquests, and by so doing compromised her fortune; for not unfrequently are the most skilful combinations destroyed, and the most glorious reigns tarnished by sudden, and unexpected changes.

The misfortunes of Louis XIV in his old age, the disasters of Charles XII, the critical situation of Peter the Great on the Pruth, and the destruction of Napoleon's armies, are important lessons, which the fate of arms, in all ages, offers to genius; but which genius, always placing too much confidence in its strength and fortune, unhappily for itself, but very rarely attends to.

It was no doubt similar reflections which induced Catherine to hesitate, and made her struggle against the suggestions of her own ambition, and the wishes of her ministers and courtiers.

Theodora, built on a steep mountain, was, it is said, founded by Doras, one of Mithridates' soldiers. This town was possessed by the last Grecian Emperor, Constantine Paleologus. At the end of the fifteenth century, the Turks took it and gave it to the Tartars.

The ancient Eupatoria, called by the Tartars, Kosloff, was situated on the north coast, between the road of Sevastopol and the isthmus of Perekop.

The rocky mountains, whose commanding circumference forms the vast gulf of Sevastopol, and which the Greeks named the Ctenus, are hollowed out into caverns, which justly attract the curiosity of travellers.

These immense catacombs were formerly the retreat of the Tauri, those pirates who sallied forth from their concealment like birds of prey, to commit robberies on the Black Sea. In later times, these caverns became the refuge of proscribed Greeks and persecuted christians.

There are still some chapels and the remains of an altar, and the attention is attracted by the appearance of a staircase of fifty fathoms, cut internally in the rock.

At about a league south-west of Sevastopol, we perceived the ruins of ancient Kherson; a vast wreck of edifices which were once magnificent.

This town, built six hundred years before Christ and one of the principal cities of the Kings of the Bosphorus, was no doubt, since that time and under the reign of the famous and unfortunate Mithridates, the witness of his bloody triumphs and of the cruelties which tarnished his glory.

Constantine the Great, freed it from all tribute in 322. This independence so augmented its wealth, that it held sway over all the towns south of the peninsula.

Farther on, at the extremity of a promontory which rises perpendicularly above the waves of a tempestuous sea, the imagination endeavors to discover the ancient temple consecrated to Diana of Tauris.

Iphigenia, Orestes, and Pylades, seemed to stand again before us, and adorn the history of those barbarous times with all the pleasing coloring of fable.

The Greeks still called this place Parthenian, and said, that there a temple had been consecrated to the virgin goddess. On this spot, there is now a monastery dedicated to St. George, near which is a way cut in the rock, which, from the top of the mountain, leads to the door of a hermitage built on the point of a jetty, which stretches, in a straight line, about fifteen fathoms from the coast into the sea.

There are several cells here, and a church cut in the rock, which is lighted only by the opening of the door, and two narrow windows.

It was here, in the environs of this place, so

fertile in recollections and illusions, that the Empress had given the Prince de Ligne an estate; she could not have chosen any thing more suited to the taste of that amiable and accomplished Prince, whose heroism bore more affinity to the heroism of fable and romance, than to that of history.

Nassau and myself made a cruize by stretching out towards the south. We saw the port of Symbolon. There, as near all the ports of Chersonesus, are found an immense number of caverns containing chambers, chapels, cells, sepulchres, and coffins with Greek inscriptions.

The aspect of these rocks, steep mountains, profound grottos, and horrible precipices saddens the mind; they were truly fit places of pleasure for the Tauri and their good King Thoas.

Too much pre-occupied, no doubt, with these gloomy ideas, Balaclava, formerly Symbolon, could not drive them from our imagination. This town possessed considerable trade and was still almost entirely inhabited by Greeks, Armenians and Jews, preserving, without molestation or restraint, under the dominion of the Russians, as they did under that of the Tartars, their worship, customs and manners.

As, in all the other ancient Grecian or Asiatic towns, the streets are narrow, the houses low, and the pavement formed of stones of various colors.

The active and industrious inhabitants of this island, endeavor to improve their melancholy

situation, by building, on the declivity of the high black mountains which surround them, a great number of gardens with terrace walks.

Having rejoined the court, we left Sevastopol to return to Bachtchi-Sarai, by the way of Alma; the only remarkable object this route presented, was a high hill, named Biaklia-Kauba, which from the top to the bottom is full of caverns; when tyranny reigned on earth, it was only in the deep recesses of these caverns, that men could find shelter and security.

At Bachtchi-Sarai, the Prince de Ligne came to me, and said smiling: "Do you know what at "this moment engages the attention of our two "great travelling sovereigns, the powerful Roman "Emperor, and the autocrat of all the Russians? "I just now overheard some words of a conver- "sation between these two great despots. Well, "my friend, who could have thought it? they "were talking very amicably about a very fine "project, the re-establishment of the Grecian "republics."

"You do not surprise me so much as you ima- "gine," replied I: "it is vain to strive against "the humour of the age in which we live; we "are all infected by it. The humour of our age "is philosophy and liberty, it is gently spreading "all over the world, and enters the palace as "well as the cottage. It cannot be restrained; "and if force is used to arrest its progress, as "England has just attempted to do in America, "it will only be changed into a hurricane." The

Prince laughed at this philosophical reverie. At that time we little imagined, that it was a prophecy.

On our return to the Khan's seraglio, it was natural enough that the sight of those voluptuous cabinets should awaken some ideas of gallantry; the Prince de Ligne's curiosity, who was younger in feeling at fifty, than I was at thirty, led me into a folly, which fortunately was attended with less disagreeable consequences than we might justly have anticipated, but which drew on us a severe and well merited lesson.

You cannot offer a greater insult to Musulmans than to approach their wives; the pleasure, even of beholding them, is denied to every man, but their husbands.

This restraint irritated the curiosity of the Prince. "What pleasure is there," he said to me, "in running through a large garden of which "we are not permitted to examine the flowers? "I must at least, before I leave Tauris, see one "Tartar female without a veil, and I am deter- "mined on it. Will you accompany me in this "enterprise?"

I did not resist the temptation, and we passed through several vallies, in a hope which was long disappointed. At length, not far from a house standing by itself, we perceived, on the borders of a little wood, three women seated, washing their feet in a limpid stream.

Without making the least noise, we instantly glided behind some trees, and stationed ourselves

very advantageously in front of them, while we were concealed by a thicket from their observation.

As the veils of these women were on the ground near them, we could examine them at our leisure. But alas! what a disappointment! not one of them was either pretty, young, or even passable. "Egad," exclaimed my companion inconsiderately, "Mahomet was right in wishing them to hide "themselves."

Whether they heard our voices, or whether the rustling of the leaves betrayed us, I know not, but they rose hastily, and screaming violently, fled from the place.

We followed them in order to appease them, when we beheld coming from the mountain several Tartars who made still more noise than the women had done, threatened us with their poniards, and threw stones at us.

As we were not prepared to fight, we had no inclination to wait their arrival; a precipitate retreat, and the thickness of the woods soon placed us out of their reach.

As far as this, the evil was not great, according to the easy moral which says, that all concealed sin is half pardoned: but my imprudent friend did not stop here.

The next day, at dinner, the Empress was silent and melancholy, the Emperor absorbed in his reflections, and Prince Potemkin gloomy and absent; there was but little conversation, and that little was dull and vapid.

Observing this, the Prince de Ligne, who disliked the appearance of *ennui*, thought proper, in order to amuse the Empress, and enliven his companions, to relate our last night's exploits and adventures. In vain I pinched him in order to silence him, he boldly continued his narration.

All began laughing as he expected, when Catherine, looking at us with a stern and severe countenance, said: " Gentlemen, this is a very " ill advised amusement, and a very bad example! " you are living among a people conquered by my " arms; and I wish their laws, their religion, " their manners, and their prejudices to be res- " pected."

" If any one had related this adventure to me " without naming the heroes, far from suspecting " that you were the actors of it, I should rather " have judged some of my pages the guilty per- " sons and have punished them severely."

We had nothing to reply. The Prince de Ligne as well as myself remained silent, in addition to which he was somewhat confused at his imprudent loquacity.

Our resignation satisfied the Empress; who resumed her amiable cheerfulness, and a few days afterwards, having granted an audience to a Mussulman Princess, she even allowed us to conceal ourselves in such a manner as to see without being seen.

The Princess was handsomer than the three female Tartars, but her painted eye brows, and the shining paint which covered her face trans-

formed her, notwithstanding her fine eyes, into a perfect figure of porcelaine.

Our repose was short: we quitted the steep rocks of Bachtchi-Sarai, the palace, and seraglio of the Khan, and arrived on the banks of the Salguire, in the town of Achmetschet, which Catherine named Sympheropol. It is now the capital of the peninsula. This town is situated in the middle of a level plain; surrounded at some distance by hills, whose vallies are adorned with delightful groves, smiling gardens, and tall and majestic poplars.

The rich Tartars, who inhabit these vallies, choose the most beautiful trees, whose branches stretch out in a circular form, and, in the centre of this basket of leaves, they form pretty summer-houses; the bright and varied colors of these delicate airy pavillions, glittering in the sun, present to travellers an unexpected and pleasing *coup d'œil.*

Achmetschet was the residence of the Kalgas sultans, the first officers of the Khans of the Crimea, and chiefs of their troops. In this town, as well as in every other where we stopped during our journey, an elegant, convenient and spacious house had been prepared for the Empress.

We stopped but one day at Sympheropol, and thence we went to Karasou-Bazar which the Greeks called Mavron Kastron. This town, situated in a large valley, was one of the largest in Tauris. There was nothing to admire in it but the beauty of its situation; it contained no remarkable building, nor any ancient ruins. The

houses, like all the Tartar houses, were very low, irregularly built, and arranged without any symmetry. Before the conquest, this place, as well as Sympheropol belonged to the sultan Kalga.

The mountains of the Crimea, which commence on the banks of the Salguire, do not form a regular succession untill they reach Karasou-Bazar. From that town they run in a chain on one side to Bachtchi-Sarai, and on the other to Star-Krim.

If nature did not, in this spot, present to their Imperial Majesties fit objects to interest their curiosity, the indefatigable activity of Prince Potemkin supplied the deficiency. In addition to the fine wide road which he had caused to be dug and levelled by his soldiers, he had employed them in forming, on the river of Karasou, a large English garden, in the centre of which was a most elegant palace. It was no longer Armida who wished to seduce Rinaldo ; on the contrary, it was the Russian Rinaldo, who gallantly created prodigies for his Armida.

When Catherine descended from her palace to enjoy the freshness of the evening, the limpid clearness of the waters, and the perfume of the flowers, she beheld, all of a sudden, just at the moment the sun was disappearing, at the back of the gloomy vallies, all the hills, in a horizon of five leagues in diameter, illuminated by three lines of fire works of various colors, and in the middle of this splendid horizon, a conical hill whose sparkling centre formed in luminous strokes the Empress's cypher. From the top of this hill

arose a magnificent fire work, crowned with an explosion of a hundred thousand rockets.

The day after this fête, the pomp of which seemed, for a moment, to have drawn the Musulmans from their proud coldness and apathetic indifference, Catherine, having reviewed a numerous body of Russian troops, set out, escorted, as usual, by a squadron of Tartars, entered the mountains and gave directions to proceed towards Soudak. Before arriving there, we passed through the Greek town of Toplie and a Tartar village named Elbouzi.

Soudak presents to navigators a tolerably good port. This town, situated at the distance of fifty-five wersts from Karasou-Bazar, is seated on an elevated and isolated rock, at a little distance from the sea. This rock is surrounded, on three sides, by mountains and deep precipices, the aspect of which appeared to me as commanding as it is varied.

The Greeks called it Sidagios, the Italians Soldai, the Tartars Soudak. From 1204 to the end of the fourteenth century, it enjoyed perfect independence; afterwards, it became tributary to the Ongres and Tartars. The Genoese took possession of it, but were soon driven out by the Turks. There was now nothing to be seen but the ruins of several towers and of three forts, which, as well as its vast circumference, attested its former grandeur.

The vineyards of Soudak were preferred to any in the peninsula, they occupied a valley of nearly

three leagues. Their fruitful vines, mixed confusedly with an immense number of all sorts of fruit trees, formed a large natural garden, which afforded a pleasing prospect, rendered particularly striking from the contrast which this agreeable object formed to the high mountains, noisy cascades and gloomy forests which surrounded it.

We continued our route towards the eastern part of Tauris, and arrived at Star-Krim, which is twenty wersts from Soudak and the same distance from Theodosia.

Star-Krim, known from the sixth century, became, in the thirteenth, one of the principal cities in Tauris. Its extensive commerce fell into decay on the invasion of the Tartars; however, some of their khans took up their abodes there.

The Greeks called it Karca or Karkoupol, the Tartars Star-Krim, which signifies ancient fortress. The Empress named it Levkopol.

We passed through its extensive valley, which is surrounded by mountains, whose declivities and windings fix the attention by the variety of objects which they present. Here there is a high mountain, from which may be seen at once the Black Sea, the Sea of Azoph and the Sivache or Putrid Sea.

We stopped there a very short time, and arrived, in a few hours, within the walls, or rather ruins, of the unfortunate and celebrated Theodosia.

It bore that harmonious name in the time of its grandeur. The Tartars, struck with its mag-

nificence, called it Kerim-Stambouly, which means the Constantinople of Crimea. Since its destruction, it has been called Caffa. Catherine restored to it its ancient name, but without any probable hope of resuscitating its ancient splendor.

Theodosia, founded by the Milesians, is situated on a stony hill abounding with sand, near the sea coast. Its vast circumference was surrounded by high walls, ornamented with towers; when we saw them, they were falling into decay.

Its advantageous situation for commerce, soon raised it to the rank of one of the principal cities in the East. Its port was filled with a number of vessels which carried to it the productions of the rivers Don and Wolga, and of the coasts of Colchis; the furs of the North, the gilt leathers of Russia, caviar and sturgeons, were sold to advantage in Greece and Italy. Caffa, was to Musulmans, a great market for slaves whom they took from Circassia, Caucasus and Georgia. Its population was rapidly increased, by the inhabitants of the kingdom of Bosphorus, who came in multitudes and settled there.

In the first year of the christian era, the Alani destroyed it; afterwards the Bosphorians raised it from its ruins, and their possession of it was disputed by the people of the Khersonesus.

At the end of the thirteenth century, the Genoese, under the orders of Valdo Doria, founded a new town, which soon became large and populous, rich, commercial and celebrated.

Some authors say that there existed forty thousand houses. A catholic bishop was established here, whose jurisdiction extended from Saraï, on the Wolga, to Varna in Bulgaria. The Armenians also had a bishop and founded a large school here.

In the fourteenth century, the Tartars attacked it without being able to take possession of it. Pope Clement the Sixth, wished to raise an army of crusaders for its deliverance. At this epoch its vast fortifications were built.

The more nearly the Eastern empire approached its downfall, the more the power of Theodosia was increased, by the multitude of Greeks who sought shelter within its walls, against the Ottoman armies. But it at length fell in its turn, and twelve years after the taking of Constantinople, by Mahomet the Second, Theodosia lost its independence, as well as the greater part of its wealth. It was ceded to the Tartars, and, for a length of time, their dominion was gentle and moderate.

Caffa might have hoped, by her rich commerce which was reviving, still to preserve some prosperity; but, on one hand, in the eighteenth century, the establishment of the port of Taganrok, by the Russians, which opened a new market to merchants, and another channel to navigators; and on the other, the bloody dissensions of the Tartar princes, and, finally, the invasion of the Crimea, by the Russians, under the command of

Prince Dolgorouki, completed the ruin both of the peninsula and of Caffa.

When Catherine ascended the throne, the shadow of this once celebrated town was all that remained. We did not find two thousand inhabitants wandering through all these wrecks of churches, palaces and sumptuous edifices; the silence of destruction reigned around us.

At the sight of this gloomy spectacle, which formed so afflicting a contrast to the magical creations with which the Empress had, till now been delighted, that Princess could not avoid shedding tears; it seemed as if destiny wished, at the close of her triumphant journey, to moderate her pride by the saddening aspect of these solemn witnesses of human vicissitudes, and of the destruction which the most flourishing cities are to suffer by turns, a destruction, which even the most powerful empires shall not escape.

To dispel the impressions produced by this solitude and the ruins, we went over the peninsula of Kertch. It is a plain, intersected by several rivers, and interspersed with some groves or thickets of wood. There are some salt lakes in it. The earth rises on the approach to the Sea of Azoph, and the strait of Yenicale.

Kertch was first called Panticapœum, by the Greeks, and then Bosphorus. It is situated at the foot of a mountain, on the borders of a strait formerly called Cimmerian, but now known by

the name of the strait of Yenicale. Its harbour is large and safe.

Mithridates is said to have died at Panticapœum. On the sand, four wersts from Kertch, there are some rather high hills, and the inhabitants, in conformity with a vulgar tradition, say that one of these hills was the grave of Mithridates. However, almost all historians agree in affirming that the son of this great King, the infamous Pharnaces, sent the dead body of his father to his conqueror Pompey, who was then in Asia, and that, that Roman, worthy of his great fame, after shedding noble tears over the mortal remains of an unfortunate hero, had the corpse interred at Sinope, with funeral pomp. Kertch contains but one church, one fortress, and a small number of houses inhabited by Grecian fishermen. No wrecks of monuments, nor remains of columns, recall the remembrance of its ancient grandeur.

Five leagues farther on, at the angle of the peninsula, are the fortress of Yenicale, and some huts, the sole occupation of whose possessors, is fishing for sturgeon. The length of the whole peninsula, from Caffa to Yenicale is about 120 wersts, and its extreme breadth about 50.

The Empress had, at first, formed the project of following the coast, keeping up towards the North, in order to see the towns of Arabat, Marioupol, Taganrok, Tcherskata, the chief place of the Don Cossacks, and last of all Azoph. But the advanced season, the unhealthiness of

the coast, and the important affairs which recalled Catherine to the capital, induced her to change her plan. Theodosia, then, terminated this great journey.

When on the point of leaving these deplorable ruins, I had a singular adventure, which, however, I should not have thought of relating had it not appeared well adapted to give a just notion of manners, in a country where slavery exists, and at the same time of the originality which characterized Prince Potemkin.

We were just going to commence our journey, the Empress was already in her carriage, and I was hastily descending the steps of her palace to join her, when, all of a sudden, there appeared before me a young woman dressed in the Asiatic fashion. Her size, her gait, her eyes, her forehead, her mouth, in short all her features, presented, with inconceivable accuracy, the perfect image of my wife.

Surprise rendered me motionless. I doubted whether I was awake; I believed for a moment that Madame de Segur was really come from France in search of me, and that they had taken pleasure in concealing the event, and preparing for me this unexpected meeting: the imagination travels quickly, and I was in the country of wonders.

In the mean time Prince Potemkin, seeing me stand like a statue, called to me in vain, and ran to tell me that the Empress was waiting for me.

The young woman withdrew, and my too short dream was broken; I related it in a few words to the Prince.

" Is the resemblance then so complete?" said he. I answered that it was " perfect and incre-
" dible."

" Well then!" replied he, laughing, " *batushka*
" (a familiar and friendly expression) this young
" Circassian belongs to a man who will allow
" me to dispose of her as I think proper, and as
" soon as we arrive at Petersburgh I will make
" you a present of her." I thanked him, but added, " I shall not accept your offer; I think
" such a proof of sentiment would appear very
" strange to Madame de Segur."

We separated, and I thought all was over: but, some time afterwards, the Prince convinced me that he was piqued at my refusal; he attributed it to a false delicacy which prevented me from receiving a present from him. " I will prove
" that you are mistaken," I said to him, " by
" accepting any other present which you may be
" pleased to offer me."

He took me at my word, and, on his return to the capital, after the taking of Oczakoff, he gave me a young Kalmuc child, named Nagun; the most original Chinese little figure that could be seen. I took care of him for a long time, and I taught him to read; but when I returned to France, the Countess de Cobentzel, who was very much amused with him, pressed me so earnestly to give him to her, that I consented. I

have still in my possession the portrait of this little Tartar.

We set out from Cafa to return straight to Petersburgh, and after traversing again the Crimea, the isthmus of Perecop, and the desert of the Nogays, we arrived at Kisikerman, where Joseph the Second and Catherine separated, mutually renewing the assurances of a friendship which this long journey was calculated to strengthen.

Thence we went to Krementchuk, where the Empress rested. The Emperor, at his departure, said to me, that when he had visited Kilbourn, gone through Galicia, and seen his capital again, he would assemble two camps to execute grand manœuvres, and he invited me to join him when I quitted Petersburgh, to enjoy the leave of absence which had been granted me.

During the latter part of our journey, when we renewed our accustomed walks together in the midst of the steppes, His Majesty, after affording me an opportunity of talking with him on the affairs of Constantinople, spoke to me openly of the political views of himself and Catherine.

I do not think it useless to relate, in a few words, this conversation, to shew the opinion which he entertained of the Empress, of her establishments, her power, and her ambition.

"You are now satisfied, I hope," he said to me, one day: "M. de Bulgakoff, and M. de Herbert, are about to present to the Porte the propositions agreed on with you: do you not now think that we may expect peace?"

" Count," I replied, (for he was really displeased if I unthinkingly addressed him by the title of Sire, or your Majesty) " all depends on " the light in which the Empress herself regards " these propositions, and on the tone with which " they may be presented; perhaps she regards " them only as good materials for a manifesto. " I fear that the sight of her forces assembled " by sea and land, may have destroyed in her " mind the dread of obstacles which appeared " likely to impede her views of aggrandisement.

" All is ready; and as soon as she wishes it, " under pretence that the Turks delay redressing " the grievances of which she complains, a party " of her troops can attack Oczakoff and Akerman. Those places are incapable of long resistance and will be easily taken. At the same " time another part of her army, put on board the " fleet of Sevastopol, may make a descent on the " coast situated between Constantinople and " Varna, and by so doing insult the capital of " the Ottoman empire, and perhaps even make " themselves masters of it, if terror should seize " the minds of the superstitious Mussulmans.

" The Turks, on the contrary, no longer possessing the Crimea, must, before they are able " to attack the Russians, cross Bulgaria, Bessarabia, Moldavia, Walachia, and New-Servia where " a disciplined army can scarcely exist. Besides, " fifty thousand Russians would suffice to arrest " their progress either at the Bug or at the Dniester. I am aware of but one political obstacle

" which can make the Empress hesitate, and you " know better than I do in what degree she " dreads that impediment."

" I understand you perfectly," replied the Emperor, " my compliance at the time of the con- " quest of the Crimea makes you apprehend that " I shall second new views of agrandisement. " You are deceived, I sincerely wish to preserve " peace. The possession of the Crimea by the " Russians did not in the smallest degree incon- " venience me; it served only to render the " Turks more peaceable, by taking from them " the power of commencing war.

" Besides, it was productive of immense advan- " tages to me: in the first place, it sheltered my " dominions from the attacks of the Turks, by the " fear which it excited, lest the Russian troops " and vessels of the Crimea should attack them " in the rear; and it also secured to me the cer- " tainty of detaching the court of Petersburgh " from that of Berlin, and of depriving the latter " of a powerful ally.

" These are the real motives which determined " me to make the Porte cede Tauris to Cathe- " rine; but now every thing is very different, " and I will not consent to the Russians settling " themselves at Constantinople. The neigh- " bourhood of turbans will always be less dan- " gerous to Vienna than that of hats.

" As to the rest of the project, formed by the " exalted imagination of the Empress, it is im- " practicable, and if it required only an edict to

" render her mistress of Constantinople and to
" place the crown on the head of her grand-son
" Constantine, she could not maintain her autho-
" rity there against the Ottoman forces collected
" in Asia-Minor, and against all the great powers
" who would embrace their cause; besides which
" she must, in that case, strip her whole empire
" of soldiers, leave half of it without any means
" of defence, and change its capital."

" Why indeed I believe," I replied, " that
" we may be perfectly easy as to the existence of
" Constantinople, the preservation of which is as
" important to the court of Vienna as to that of
" France; but, at the same time, it is difficult after
" the immense preparations which we have wit-
" nessed not to feel alarmed concerning another
" project infinitely more probable, that of ex-
" tending the Russian limits as far as the Dniester.
" The execution of this design would produce a
" war extremely injurious to our interests.

" What I hope is, that the wisdom of the Em-
" peror, and his friendship for the King will in-
" duce him to follow up his pacific negociations,
" and to use all necessary measures for the pre-
" vention of a rupture. It seems to me that the
" King has a right to expect this; for on the in-
" vasion of the Crimea, he only persuaded the
" Turks to cede that peninsula to Russia, with a
" view to secure the tranquillity, and advance
" the political interests of his brother-in-law and
" ally."

" I do all in my power," said the Emperor,

" but you see yourself that this woman is tena-
" cious of her authority; the Turks must yield
" the points in dispute. Should Catherine be pro-
" voked by a refusal, how can we prevent her
" revenging herself by taking some towns? She
" possesses a large body of steady, indefatigable
" troops, ready to perform whatever she may
" command.

" You see how little is thought here of the
" life and labour of men; at eight hundred lea-
" gues from the capital, they make roads, deepen
" harbours, build on marshes, construct palaces,
" and plant English gardens in the middle of
" deserts, and all this without pay, or lodging,
" sometimes without provisions, and always
" without murmuring.

" The Empress is the only European sovereign
" who is really wealthy: she spends much every
" where, and owes nothing, her paper currency
" is valued according to her pleasure; and if she
" should fancy it, she could turn leather into
" money. England is crushed under a mountain
" of paper. France has just publicly declared
" the miserable condition of her finances, and, as
" for myself, I can with difficulty meet the ex-
" pences attendant on my colonies in Galicia, and
" the new fortresses I have built there."

I replied, " that all these embarrassments, which
" were but too real, were so many reasons for our
" redoubling every effort to prevent our being in-
" volved in an expensive war."

As we frequently recurred to the same subject

of conversation, I endeavored to prove to him that the colossal power of the Russians was more elevated than substantial.

" Observe," I said, " every thing here pos-
" sesses more splendor than reality; all is
" begun, nothing is completed. Prince Potemkin
" abandons with promptitude, what he com-
" menced with ardour; none of his projects are
" matured or steadily pursued. He induced you
" at Ekaterinoslaff to lay the first stone of a
" capital which will not be inhabited, and of a
" church as large as St. Peter's at Rome, in
" which, perhaps, mass will never be said. He
" has chosen for the site of the new city of Cathe-
" rine, a mountain which commands a fine pros-
" pect, but which is quite destitute of water.

" Kherson, badly situated, cost 20,000 men,
" and is surrounded by pestilential marshes,
" besides which, loaded vessels cannot enter it.

" Since the last six years they are more deso-
" late than they were, and the Crimea has lost
" two thirds of its population; Caffa is ruined
" and will never recover itself; Sevastopol alone
" is already an imposing establishment, but much
" time must yet elapse before it can become a
" regular town.

" All is decorated, embellished, and animated
" for a time in the eyes of the Empress, but when
" Catherine quits these immense tracts of land,
" all these delusions disappear with her."

" I know prince Potemkin; his *coup de théâtre*

" is over, and the curtain is lowered; he is " about to engage in other scenes, either in Po- " land or Turkey.

" The administration of affairs, and all that " requires order and method, is incompatible with " his character; war even, were he to commence " it, would soon become troublesome and dis- " gusting to him, and if he were but possessed of " the ribbon of St. George, we should see him as " anxious to establish peace, as he now is to " break it."

" I agree to all that you have now said," replied the Emperor; " we have been led from " illusion to illusion. Internal objects here are " very defective, but external ones are as sub- " stantial as they are brilliant. The soldier " and the peasant are the instruments made " use of to demolish whatever is desired. The " well-subjected nobility know no law but the " will of their sovereign, and their only desire is " to obtain her favor. She commands: the " troops are raised, and the vessels launched. " In Russia there is no interval between the " order, however capricious, and its execution.

" If a Charles XII was at the head of this " nation, with 600,000 men, he would carry ter- " ror into the farthermost parts of Europe."

It was easy to judge that, with such ideas, the Emperor would not offer a very obstinate resistance to the wishes of Catherine, and that he would, in spite of his desire to the contrary, give

his passive consent to a war, if the refusing to do so threatened him with the loss of so powerful an ally.

It is, however, not the less true that at the time, of which I have been speaking, Russia, as was said by the emphatical and significant Diderot, was as yet nothing more than a colossus supported on feet of clay; but this clay has been allowed to harden, and it is now changed into bronze.

The Emperor, while he laughed at the faults of Prince Potemkin, could well account for the influence which he possessed over Catherine. "But I cannot conceive," said he to me one day, "how a woman so proud, and so careful of her "glory can show such a weak indulgence to the "caprices of her young aide-de-camp Momonoff, "who is really nothing better than a spoilt child.

"I cannot express how much I was annoyed "at an absurdity of conduct which you must "have remarked as well as myself; several "times, and particular at Kherson, in presence "of an extensive circle, or more properly "speaking in public, she admitted him to her "own whist table, with the most important per-"sonages; in addition to which she quietly per-"mitted this young man, in a fit of absence of "mind, to take the chalk, with which, in Russia, "they mark the points, and make use of it in draw-"ing figures and landscapes on the cloth, while "all were waiting motionless and with their eyes

" cast down, for the termination of this childish " amusement, in order to resume their game."

The observation was just: Catherine, whose character was infinitely more gentle and condescending, than those imagined who did not know her intimately, carried perhaps to an extreme her indulgent kindness towards the caprices of Prince Potemkin, the follies of her Grand-Equerry, and the fits of absence to which Momonoff was subject. But this critical reflection lost much of its force in the mouth of the person who made it; for, too eager himself to please Catherine, he lavished on the young favorite continual marks of kindness and consideration; and, enduring even the whimsical haughtiness of Prince Potemkin, he allowed himself, like other courtiers of the Empress, to be kept waiting for his appearance in the saloon without complaining.

What do such inconsistencies prove? That Princes are but men, and that, if their vanity sometimes leads them to forget their mortality, their weakness too often recalls it not only to the minds of their subjects in general, but also to the minds of their most obsequious flatterers.

The Empress, after bidding farewell to the Emperor at Kisikerman, proceeded on her journey, and arrived at Krementchuk on the 16th of June. She was very well pleased at having thus accomplished, without meeting with any accident, the most interesting part of this important journey.

" They did all they could," she said to me,

" to deter me from undertaking it. I was as-
" sured, on all sides, that my progress would be
" impeded by obstacles; they endeavored to
" frighten me by talking of the aridity of the de-
" serts, the fatigue of the journey, and the un-
" healthiness of the climate. Those folks were
" but little acquainted with my disposition; they
" did not know that to oppose is to excite me,
" and that every difficulty I encounter serves only
" to spur me on."

We stopped only two days at Krementchuk, and left it on the 18th for Pultawa, where we were expected by 50,000 Russians, encamped on the same ground where fortune, forsaking Charles XII and crowning Peter the Great, had changed the destinies of the North and East of Europe.

At Krementchuk, Catherine the Second convinced me that, notwithstanding my recent efforts to place the Turks in a condition to defend themselves, she had freely restored to me all her wonted graciousness: while engaged in running over the environs of the town, I was informed that the Empress wished to see me. I immediately obeyed her orders, and found her in her cabinet with the Prince de Ligne.

" I saw you from my window," she said,
" walking with the air of a man who was either
" tired, or engaged in gloomy meditations, and I
" thought I should not displease you by endea-
" voring to dispel the apparently sad reflections
" which occupied your thoughts."

" Yes," added the Prince de Ligne, smiling, " you had the slow demure step, and sober sad- " ness of her Majesty's Vice-Chancellor; but " however, do not deceive yourself as to the oblig- " ing attention of which you have just received a " proof; for even now, just before you came in, I, " who speak sincerely, will not deny that we " were saying much against you."

" He is in the right," replied the Empress, " for I was saying that, however much I might " wish to keep you near me, you would never- " theless very soon leave me, never again to re- " turn. As to the rest, the Prince de Ligne " amuses himself at your expense, for he has not " told you a word of truth: the fact is that he " was extolling to me, in the highest terms, your " character and talents, and in that I did not con- " tradict him; I even added that, judging of " others by myself, I thought we should not see " you again in Russia, as in all probability the " King, in a very short time, would require your " advice in his councils.

It may easily be imagined that I was full of acknowledgments for this courtesy. " I shall " imitate, Madam," I said " the example which " you set me, and make bold to say a little against " your Majesty; it is that you are too good, too " indulgent, too partial to those whom you honor " with your favor. I can, however, assure your " Majesty, that your good opinion appears to me " the highest prize which the noblest ambition " can desire to attain."

The Empress having, with her usual affability, prolonged, for some time, this interview, informed me that she had sent, throughout all the Northern and Southern ports of her Empire, the orders necessary to secure to us the enjoyment of the advantages stipulated in our treaty of commerce.

It was also at Krementchuk that the Prince de Nassau separated from us to return to France. I entrusted him with my dispatches, at the same time informing M. de Montmorin that he could give him a more accurate and minute detail of the military powers of Russia and of the inclinations of Prince Potemkin, than any one else, as he had lived several months with him in the most complete intimacy, before joining us at Kioff.

The Empress arrived at Pultawa without stopping at Constantinograd, and the time of her remaining there was not one of the least brilliant, or least interesting epochs of her voyage.

Pultawa, a small, ill-fortified town, and but thinly inhabited, possessing neither building nor monument worthy of exciting attention, would have been known only to the erudite, had not a splendid victory, and a great misfortune, which happened in 1709, fixed on it the attention of Europe, and rendered it immortal.

The plain which surrounds this town, became the field of battle in which the fate of Sweden, Poland, and Russia was decided. There, a destroying hero fell from his triumphal car; there, in short, the throne of the legislator of Muscovy was established. If Peter had fallen, this vast

empire would, perhaps, have been for ever doomed to ignorance and barbarism; he conquered, and very soon afterwards Russia became one of the most powerful kingdoms in the world.

On this far famed day, the two heroic sovereigns of the North fought at once as soldiers and generals. Peter the Great, according to his custom, to teach his warriors that obedience must precede authority, and that it was necessary to gain each rank by the exploits of the sword, had given the command of his army to Bauer. The wings were commanded by Menzikoff and Scheremetoff; the Czar served under them as Major-General: rushing with ardor into the midst of the battle, his coat was pierced with several balls.

Charles, who had been wounded at the commencement of the action, ordered them to carry him on a litter, which was dashed to pieces by a cannon ball; another was quickly formed of spears and lances, on which he long continued to brave the fire and swords of the enemy: such examples inspired the most timid with courage and fortitude.

The King of Sweden had attacked Pultawa with twenty-seven thousand men. Peter, who was engaged in fortifying Taganrok, hastened to meet him at the head of sixty thousand.

The river Worskla separated the Russians from the besiegers, whose camp was fortified by redoubts. The Emperor, by a skilful manœuvre, pretended to withdraw, passed the river, in-

trenched himself and rushed unawares on the Swedes. These last flew to arms, repulsed the enemy, and attacked, the Russian intrenchments, with their usual impetuosity.

Prodigies of valor, on both sides, rendered the victory for many hours doubtful. At length, numbers gained the day. Charles was defeated; his repulsed cavalry turned back on his infantry and threw it into the greatest disorder.

The Swedish hero was obliged to retire from before the rival whom he had so long vanquished and disdained. Retreat was changed into confusion; the carnage was dreadful; and the overthrow complete. Charles, having lost the greater part of his army, his ministers, his generals, his best officers, his artillery and his baggage, was obliged to fly and seek refuge in Turkey.

The sketch which I have just given of this event became, for us, an animated picture, a living, moving transaction—all but a reality. We beheld the Russian army divided into two bodies; one occupied the Russian intrenchments, the other the Swedish redoubts. In the presence of the Empress, under the orders of Prince Potemkin, the Russian soldiers executed with much skill, precision and quickness, all the various movements which the imagination would suppose to have taken place in the famous battle of which this was the image.

The deploying of four columns of cavalry, their impetuous charge, the quick and sustained fire of the infantry, while the left wing pre-

tended an attack from a wood, and turned the right of the enemy, left nothing wanting to complete the fidelity of the picture.

Catherine's eyes sparkled with animation and delight; one might have thought that the blood of Peter the Great flowed in her veins. This grand and magnificent spectacle was well calculated to crown a journey which was quite as romantic as it was historical.

Prince Potemkin presented her with a magnificent pearl necklace; she loaded him with presents, and was prodigal to her officers and generals in gifts of rank and in decorations. The civil administration likewise shared her munificence.

Nothing occurring to detain the Empress longer; she set out from Pultawa on her way to Karkoff. There, Prince Potemkin took leave of her, and returned to Krementchuk, with orders to accelerate all warlike preparations, in the event of peace not continuing.

Karkoff is situated on a high hill, near the rivers Karkoff and Lopani three hundred and sixty leagues from Petersburgh. It was founded in the middle of the seventeenth century by the Cossacks, with a view of placing a barrier against the incursions of the Tartars of the Crimea. It contained twelve thousand inhabitants; its commerce, which was tolerably good, consisted in tallow, butter, wax and honey. Most of the houses are built of wood.

We next passed through the rich and fertile provinces of Kursk and Orel. Before our arrival

at Kursk, we saw the towns of Belgorod and Oboian, in which we remarked the rapid progress of civilization. Formerly, in the midst of their ill built and ill arranged houses, the eye could distinguish nothing but a few churches and convents; the Empress established hospitals, tribunals and schools. The only ruins I remarked were those of a fortress, become useless since the arms of Catherine had extended the limits of her empire.

Kursk, the capital of a government, was rich and populous. It had been rebuilt on a new plan. Its inhabitants shewed us the Convent of Zuamensk or the Convent of Miracles, so called in remembrance of the flight of a foreign army which formerly besieged the town; a flight regarded as miraculous by Russian credulity,

It contained two thousand houses, two schools, one for young noblemen, the other for the children of merchants and citizens, several tanneries, and some manufactories. It is famous for the beauty of its leathers; it sends many of its productions to Poland, and as far as Breslaw; and receives from Siberia, and even from Kiakta, on the Chinese frontier, a great number of furs. The Tartars, the former masters of Russia, again attacked Kursk, in the seventeenth century and lost two great battles under its walls.

On leaving this town, we went to Orel, where we remained some time. When there, we were still two hundred and seventy leagues from Petersburgh, and ninety two from Moscow. Orel

is situated in an agreeable plain between Oka and Orlik; it is a pretty town, the capital of a government which bears its name. It was formerly fortified.

This province was very rich in corn and hemp; it received wines from Moldavia, Tauris and Astracan. It contained seventeen parishes, and three thousand houses, some of wood and some of stone. Catherine had embellished it with noble buildings designed for tribunals and the public authorities. The river Oka, after an extensive course, joins itself with the Wolga near Nijni-Novogorod.

The youth of Orel presented a very agreeable sight to the Empress: the children of the most distinguished families in the town represented a play before her Majesty, which they acted with equal unison, effect and intelligence; the matter was amusing enough, and although the allusions it contained were pointed, yet its praises were not disfigured by flattery.

The prosperity of the provinces of the interior and centre of the empire, was annually increased by the fertility of the soil, the activity of commerce, and the mild government of Catherine: there, as every where else, there was no occasion to demand homage; the Empress was received like a mother, and the people, whom she protected against the abuse of power by the nobles, manifested an enthusiasm inspired by gratitude alone.

Continuing our route to Moscow, we found

nothing very remarkable but the town of Toula; one might almost count it among the creations of Catherine, so much had she improved and beautified it. Already, a great number of houses built of wood, had been replaced by handsome stone edifices.

In addition to other establishments, the generosity of the Empress had founded an hospital for foundlings and a retreat for invalids.

The situation of Toula, built partly on an eminence, and partly on a plain which is watered by the Oupa, is pleasant and picturesque. To trace the history of this town, would be almost the same thing as to repeat that of all the other cities of Russia. Nothing would be observable, in this recital, but the picture of dissensions, civil wars, and all the miseries caused by a long anarchy.

Near Toula, in the seventeenth century, a great battle was fought between the false Demetrius, whose real name was Otrepieff, and the Russians under the command of Shouisky; the impostor was defeated.

This town had been long known for its manufacture of arms; it furnished them for the whole Russian army. Here they also worked in steel, and this branch of industry, being encouraged by Catherine, had arrived at such a state of perfection, that it might claim competition with the English manufactures.

His Majesty made each of us a present of some production of this kind, very neatly executed. The Empress's first physician, Mr. Rogerson, re-

ceived from her a very splendid sword: "Doc-
"tor," said I to him, "I congratulate you; you
"have there, a new prescription, both sure and
"expeditious." My compliment was not so well received as I should have expected, from a man so celebrated for his skill, and consequently, so far above the reach of any malicious joke.

Before our arrival at Moscow, we passed through Serpoukouff and Podol, both common-place towns. At length, we arrived on the 4th of July, at Kolumensky, an elegant country-seat, belonging to the Empress, situated two leagues from Moscow.

During the latter part of our journey, I had a short interview with Catherine, which I think I should relate, because it shews, in a few words, the energetic character of that extraordinary woman.

I was in her carriage with Mr. Fitz-Herbert: the extreme heat rendered the conversation dull and languid, Catherine was asleep, or at least appeared to be so, and Fitz-Herbert and I were talking together.

Among various other subjects, we discoursed on the American war, and on the revolution, which had robbed England of thirteen flourishing provinces.

Mr. Fitz-Herbert asserted that this loss would prove more advantageous than hurtful to his country. Such a paradox amazed me; but he supported his opinion with as much obstinacy as talent, endeavoring to show that, in a short time, England, freed from the enormous expences

which the administration of her colonies cost her, would draw from her commerce, with these provinces, immense advantages, without any expenditure, which would sufficiently compensate for the loss of an imaginary empire.

The discussion was long, and the Empress did not open her eyes until just as we were about to alight. The next day, being with her, in the company of the Prince de Ligne, she said to me: "You had, yesterday, a most unaccountable "conversation with Mr. Fitz-Herbert, and I "cannot conceive how, with so much sense as "he possesses, he can maintain so strange an "opinion."

"How, Madam," answered I, "you heard us, "although you appeared to sleep so soundly!"— "I was too curious," she replied, "to hear the "end of your conversation to open my eyes before "it was finished. I know not, whether George "the Third is of his minister's opinion; but, for "my own part, I am sure that if I had like him, "lost, without the power of regaining it, one of "the thirteen provinces, of which he has been "deprived, I should have blown my brains out."

"It really seems to me, Madam," I replied, "that your Majesty has made a compact with "fortune."—"I do not know that," cried the Prince de Ligne, "but it is very certain, that pos-"sessed of that firmness of character, which "common people would call rashness, it is pos-"sible both to seize on the provinces of others "and keep our own."

I shall say but little of Moscow; that name recals to mind ideas and recollections too saddening. Besides, the description of that large and beautiful capital has been given a hundred times; there are but few families in which we do not meet with a warrior covered with glory and wounds, whose recitals have made them acquainted with the palaces, the gardens, the temples, the barracks, the ruins, the fields, the Kremlin, the Chinese quarter, the gilt steeples, which present in Moscow, the whimsical image of several groups of palaces or castles, each surrounded by its several village.

The greatest part of Moscow has been burnt to the ground ; since which, it has risen from its ashes, and will be henceforth a new town for travellers to visit and describe.

It is easy to imagine what was the magnificence of the feasts and banquets which a numerous, proud, and wealthy nobility hastily prepared for the Empress ; and if it was rather fatiguing to attend at them, it would be still more tiresome to describe them.

All these great fêtes were alike; large balls without spirit, imposing sights destitute of interest, complimentary verses without any wit, splendid fire-works which left nothing behind but smoke, much money, time, and labour lost: all this is well known, always said, and always will be said, but still it will not prevent the existence of such things, nor keep people from running after them.

Besides, the solemnities of Moscow, were, at this epoch, real fêtes to the merchants and people; for the Empress, with a view of celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of her reign, remitted them a part of the taxes which they usually paid her.

The Empress gave me and every one who had the honour to accompany her, a medal, which she had just had struck. On one side was the profile of Catherine, and, on the other, the map of her journey in the Crimea; the Russian inscription informed us that the epoch was the twenty-fifth year of her reign, and that the great journey, to which she had consecrated it, had been undertaken for the public good.

Notwithstanding my little taste for fêtes, I shall not pass over in silence that which was given to the Empress by the count Scheremetoff, at one of his estates situated a league from Moscow.

We found the road brilliantly illuminated. The Count's immense park was decorated with transparencies composed of all colors and exquisitely designed. A grand Russian opera was performed on a very noble theatre; and all who understood the story, pronounced it very interesting and well written. I could only judge of the music and of the ballets; the one astonished me by its harmonious melody; the others by the richness of costume, the grace of the female, and the lightness and activity of the male dancers.

But what appeared to me almost inconceivable was that the poet, and the musical authors of the

opera, the architect who had built the house, the painter who had decorated it, the actors and actresses of the piece, and the male and female dancers in the ballets, as well as the musicians in the orchestra, were all slaves of Count Scheremetoff.

This nobleman, one of the richest in Russia, had caused them to be educated with the greatest care; they were indebted to him for their acquirements; why were they not also indebted to him for their freedom? To enlighten those whom we still hold in slavery, is to inform them of their misfortune.

The supper was at least as sumptuous as the entertainment; I never saw more gold and silver vases, more porcelain, alabaster and porphyry.

But, what will appear the most incredible, is that the immense crystals which covered a table for a hundred persons, were ornamented and enriched with fine and precious stones of all kinds and colors, and of great value.

Thus the Russian nobles, so lately civilized, imitated already the Roman patricians in an extreme of grandeur, which was too quickly followed by its decline, and more than one Lucullus was to be found at Moscow.

Catherine, in her turn, was desirous to give, at the Kremlin, balls and fêtes whose magnificence should be proportioned to her rank and dignity; but, all the orders which she had given for this purpose, were countermanded, on her being suddenly informed that the governors of several pro-

vinces, having neglected to obey her instructions, and allowed the granaries, which she had established, to be drained of their abundant supply, a dearth of corn, as real as unforseen, afflicted her people.

" It would be most indecent," she said, " for " me to appear in the midst of fêtes and enjoy- " ments, while my subjects are suffering under " a calamity from which I ought to have secured " them."

I was near her when the arrival of one of these governors, who had been so culpably negligent, was announced. " I hope," said count Bezborodko, " that your Majesty will address to him publicly, the severe reprimand which he merits." " No," replied Catherine, " that would be too " humiliating; I shall wait till he is alone with " me; for I love to praise and reward in public, " and to rebuke in private."

The Empress, having rested some days at Petrowsky, set out for Petersburgh, and we arrived at Czarskozelo, on the 22d of July, after having seen, for the second time, with her, the pretty towns of Twer, Wischney-Wolotschok, Waldai, and that great Novogorod, famous formerly as a republic, and for a long time sovereign of the North, illustrious by its victories and independence.

Its enemies respected, but discord destroyed it. It had recourse to foreign princes in its intestine dissensions, and they became its masters.

Rurik made use of its forces to effect conquests, and to found a new empire.

Novogorod, sometimes triumphant, but often defeated, at length fell; when we saw it, nothing remained but ruins, a vast circumference, a fine cathedral, fifty-eight churches, an imperial palace, three convents, fifteen hundred houses, built of wood, forty of stone, some old walls, and noble remembrances.

This long and singular journey, which had presented successively the image of an immense gallery, ornamented with the most varied and novel pictures, being at length terminated, I took leave of the Empress, and returned to Petersburgh to resume a diplomatic life, which at first appeared rather grave and monotonous; it was, in fact, leaving the rapid and varied action of romance, for the slow and sober step of history.

Having quitted the magic circle, I was no longer to see, at each moment, as in our triumphant and romantic journey, new objects of surprise; fleets suddenly created, squadrons of Cossacks and Tartars, coming from the remote parts of Asia, illuminated roads, mountains on fire, enchanted palaces, gardens raised in a night, savage caverns, temples of Diana, delightful harems, wandering tribes, dromedaries and camels wandering through deserts, hospodars of Walachia, and dethroned princes of Caucasus and persecuted Georgia, paying homage, and addressing their prayers to the Queen of the North.

It was now necessary to return to dry political calculations, to those diplomatic debates in which the most important interests of the world, the fate of nations and the lives of mankind are often weighed in narrow and unequal scales.

But, if the East no longer presented to my view any thing more than the ordinary course of common affairs, of important negociations crossed by petty intrigues, and of regularly planned wars similar to those which have, for the last two ages, agitated the world, without changing its appearance, I received, from the West, news which too clearly announced the epoch of one of those great political changes which produce a complete revolution in the spirit, laws, manners, and strength of human societies; the subject of reflections, hopes and fears infinitely more weighty and profound than the sentiments inspired by that short and splendid illusion of Tauris, by that chapter of Arabian Tales, whose delusion had just disappeared.

Catherine, no less sensible of the effects of disenchantment, was busily engaged, during the first part of her residence at Czarskozelo, in taking the necessary measures for the relief of her people, exhausted by a dreadful famine. The richest provinces of the empire were quite destitute of corn, and the greater part of the Russian nobles, far from drawing any revenue from their estates, were obliged to feed their distressed peasants at their own expence.

This calamity, and the necessity in which Jo-

seph the Second was placed, of sending troops into the Netherlands, then in a state of fermentation, abated the ambitious desires with which Prince Potemkin had inspired the Empress, by the sight of her fine army, and the imposing spectacle of her naval forces collected in the port of Sevastopol.

A courier of the Emperor's, brought dispatches to Catherine, in which that Prince communicated to her, the resolution he had taken to recall, from the Netherlands, their governors and his minister, to command the states to submit, and to send him deputies, threatening to employ against them the force of his arms if they did not adopt all his plans of administrative innovation, of which he hoped to show them the justice and utility.

This intelligence rendered the Russian ministry more determined to avoid a war. Count Bezborodko was more unreserved with me, on this point, than he had ever been. In order to give me a proof of the intimacy which he desired to establish between our two courts, he told me that the London cabinet, wishing to revenge itself on Holland and us, had sent, by Mr. Harris, very considerable sums to the Statholder to enable him to support his party.

M. de Woronzoff wrote from London, that so large an export of money having affected public credit, they were endeavoring, with much address, to conceal the real cause of this sudden fall.

From this information, more or less founded, and some analogous communications of M. de Cobentzel, it was apparent that the Empress and the Emperor wished to excite us against England, and induce us to side with the two imperial courts.

Profiting by this circumstance, I endeavored to show the ministers of Catherine the necessity of modifying the terms of the late treaty relative to Moldavia and Walachia.

"You will always be on the point of war," I said to them, "while you suffer the right of pro-
"tection claimed by the Porte and by Russia
"over these provinces, to remain in its present
"doubtful state: the nature, difference and li-
"mits of this protection, or rather sovereignty,
"must be definitively fixed."

I further required, "that the negociations
"should not be rendered more difficult, by dis-
"puting, with too much obstinacy, the sultan's
"eastern protocol, in the drawing up of the
"firman which was to be sent to the Pacha of
"Achalzig; above all it was politic, if they were
"really sincere, to show no fear of an invasion by
"the Turks."

"Your political and military successes," I said,
"have taken from these Mussulmans all power
"of attack; but, if you confine them within such
"narrow boundaries, you must expect that their
"means of defence will become the more formi-
"dable from being so concentrated."

All these interviews ended in assurances of

peaceable inclinations and demonstrations of gratitude for the kind offices of the King; and I was convinced that, at this moment, the cabinet of Petersburgh sincerely wished and expected that the negociation, opened at Constantinople by MM. de Choiseul, de Bulgakoff, and de Herbert, would prove successful.

I found M. de Miranda at St. Petersburgh; he had had a rather warm altercation with the Chargé d'Affaires of Spain: the latter wanted to compel him to drop the colonel's uniform, or to exhibit the title he had to wear it. The Empress was very anxious that the misunderstanding should be amicably settled.

The Spanish Chargé d'Affaires having given me a rather cold letter to read, which he had written to that officer, he also shewed me M. de Miranda's reply, which was not only an improper one, but contained insulting and highly opprobrious expressions. I gave him to understand, that, as the matter was becoming of a personal nature, I had no advice to give him, and could have nothing more to do in it. However, after the lapse of a few days, he acquainted me of the formal order he had received from his court, to endeavor to prevail on the Empress to give up M. de Miranda to him as a fugitive, and as one arraigned of state delinquency and high treason.

I refused to support him in his proceedings, conceiving that, under such circumstances, there would be injustice and impolicy in the surrender. I merely promised that I should desist from all

further intercourse with M. de Miranda, whom I had frequently seen during my stay at Kioff.

However, as the ministers, in order to pay their court to the Empress, treated that Spaniard with great distinction, invited him to their grand dinners, and received him as one of the diplomatic body, I declared to them, by common accord with the Duke of Serra Capriola, the Neapolitan minister, that this countenance to a man who had insulted the Spanish Chargé d'Affaires, shewed a want of attention to the courts of Madrid, Naples and Versailles, and, that if it was persisted in, we must desist from all intercourse with them.

The Empress was at first offended at this bold language; her Aide-de-Camp, M. de Momonoff, had formed a close intimacy with Miranda, who was often admitted into the imperial presence. But, at last, after the lapse of a few days, she relented, advised Miranda to quit the country, and sent him away loaded with presents. He took his departure.

I met him again in France, at a later period; he commanded the left wing of our army at Nerwinde; and General Count de Valence, who was wounded in that battle, publicly attributed our defeat to him; as the courage of our right wing, during the engagement, the intrepidity displayed by Valence himself, and the brilliant valour of the Duke of Chartres, the present Duke of Orleans, had, for several hours, secured to us the victory.

In the year 1806, Miranda carried into effect the plans which he had so long formed, and land-

ed on the coast of Caraccas, with five hundred Spanish colonists who had taken shelter in the United States. He even raised himself for a short time, by many brilliant exploits, to the station of Dictator of Venezuela. He was one of the earliest actors in that great revolution which liberated so many colonies from the Spanish yoke, and was the founder of the republic of Colombia. But the closing scene of this general's career, was truly unfortunate: having been given up to his enemies by his own countrymen, after a disgraceful capitulation, he was transported to Spain, and died in prison at Cadiz, in the year 1816.

Affairs were assuming a more complicated appearance; in order to throw some light on the subject, we must go back to an earlier period.

After frequent abolitions and restorations of the Stadtholdership in Holland, this dignity had been made hereditary, in 1748, in the person of William IV, Prince of Orange; but they omitted to define any positive limits between the governing power and public liberty: indefinite privileges were preserved to the one; the other was only expressed by forms much too vague to secure the national independence, and satisfy the Prince's ambition.

William V, married to the sister of Frederick William II, King of Prussia, was neither gifted with that moderation so essential for conciliating the many contending interests, nor with that strength of character, which directs the public mind. He displayed a half energy that gives rise

to commotions, a weakness that insures them success, and withal, a tendency to resentment that shuts out all chance of agreement or amicable understanding.

Had this Prince, however, bestowed some attention to the history of the countries under his sway, it would have clearly pointed out to him the course, the duties, and the true interests to which his conduct should have been directed. Any where else, the elevation of the first magistrate in the state, might have been of obscure and doubtful origin; but in Holland, the Stadtholder ought to have known that the chief authority had been vested in his predecessors, merely for the purpose of shaking off the fetters of Spain, and conquering independence.

Thus placed at the head of a republican nation, jealous of its liberty, the Prince should have had no other aim than to secure the national tranquillity, to increase the commercial prosperity of the republic, and cause its arms to be respected; for the Stadtholdership had been created for no other object.

William V lost sight of this main object: a thirst after glory would have consolidated his power in the affections of the people; he lost them by too great an eagerness to increase his authority.

The existing circumstances were, however, favorable to him; placed between France and England, the Stadtholder should have pursued the system of a prudent neutrality, and have only armed

against which ever of those two powers might have attempted to attack the independence or the commercial interests of the republic.

England, it is well known, was then openly aiming at the dominion of the seas. France, on the contrary, being governed by a pacific sovereign, could give the Dutch no cause of uneasiness. Their land forces, therefore, became a secondary object to them, whilst it appeared more and more important that they should increase their naval strength, so as to enable them to resist the maritime ambition of England.

Public opinion was almost unanimous in this respect throughout the republic. The Stadtholder turned a deaf ear to it. The land forces presented him with ready means for extending his power; he bestowed all his attention to them, and neglected his navy. England encouraged this error, which was advantageous to its policy: from that moment, William V wholly gave himself up to the British cabinet, and shewed himself the bitter enemy of the cabinet of Versailles.

The Dutch, on the contrary, became more irritated against England, and felt the necessity of forming a closer connection with France, which, so far from threatening their territory, as it had formerly done, was sincerely desirous to promote their tranquillity as well as the augmentation of their means of defence against the aggressions of England.

War having broke out in the meanwhile be-

tween France and England, the states general determined to maintain a prudent neutrality; but the British government, in defiance of the law of nations, seized upon several Dutch ships. It had a sufficient dependance upon the favouring weakness of the Stadtholder not to apprehend any reprisals from him. Its anticipations were verified.

The irritation of the States General now grew much higher; and they resolved to solicit the aid of Catherine the Second. That Princess had just placed herself at the head of a northern maritime coalition, with a view to protect neutral flags against any attacks from the contending powers.

The Stadtholder did not dare to oppose this measure; and, to the great regret of himself and of England, the act of accession to the armed neutrality was signed.

The British cabinet immediately declared war against the republic; William was thus compelled to join France which he hated, and fight against England to which he looked up as the supporter of his authority.

Forgetting, from that moment, in his unwarrantable vexation, the wise and glorious maxims of his predecessors, he kept himself in a state of inaction which his enemies considered, or feigned to consider, as the effect of treachery.

Men of ardent and of factious minds, who are to be found in every country, like the raging storms that will shatter and overwhelm a vessel unskilfully managed, used every endeavor to turn the

public mistrust into hatred; they accused the Stadtholder of opposing the junction of the naval forces of the republic.

In spite, however, of this inactivity on his part, two Dutch admirals, Zoutemann and Kingsberg, nobly transgressing their instructions, formed a junction, and beat the English at Doggersbank. William gave an unfriendly reception to the conquerors: this was the only exploit of the republicans during the whole war; the English took many of their colonies which the victorious arms of the King of France caused to be restored to them.

Instead of allaying the prevailing ferment, William augmented it by employing, after the peace, every means in his power to influence the elections of deputies and magistrates. He thereby hoped that the legislative and executive power would be made to center in himself.

These intrigues drove the zealous partisans of liberty to the highest pitch of exasperation; a slight and casual circumstance, a frivolous dispute about precedency, at last brought about an explosion, for which both parties were too well inclined.

They soon prepared to have recourse to arms; and the interval from commotions to actual fighting was but short; all accommodation had become nearly impossible between two parties, one of which seemed anxious to destroy the Stadtholdership, the other to crush public liberty.

The Prince had, on his side, the regular troops; the states general could only oppose the city mi-

litia to him. In this critical position, they claimed the assistance of Louis XVI who had formerly supported them against the Emperor Joseph II, and had recently concluded a treaty of alliance with the republic.

It was evidently the interest of our court to support the states general against the Stadtholder, who was well known to be devoted to England; our cabinet accordingly promised its assistance; but, unfortunately, as will soon be perceived, the internal embarrassments which engaged its attention, and the wretched condition of our finances, prevented us from carrying our promises into effect.

Tranquillity would have been infallibly restored by a prompt relief; our fatal irresolutions secured the triumph of our rivals, betrayed the secret of our weakness, and were the first indications of a political decline, out of which we only emerged at a later period through the volcanic eruptions and the struggle of a revolution.

England, humbled by the treaty which had wrested America from her grasp, was irritated at observing that our influence was supplanting her own in Holland, Russia, and Austria, and balancing it at Berlin and at Constantinople.

France then maintained a proud and brilliant position; but Louis XVI could only enjoy this splendor for a moment; the British cabinet, ready to lay hold of the favorable opportunity, found means, by a skilful intrigue, to inflame the new King of Prussia, Frederick William, against the

the Dutch, and to make him determine upon revenging the insults which the populace had been instigated to offer to the Princess of Orange his sister.

Frederick declared for the Stadtholder; and, after some hesitation, and having ascertained that France had not yet collected any forces to arrest his progress, he rapidly invaded the territory of the republic, restored it to the Stadtholder, and by so doing, to British influence.

After having briefly recalled the origin and progress of this sudden revolution, I shall only have to present, as occasion may offer, some details respecting the very trifling causes that produced so great a change, and the influence which it had in regard to our political situation.

At the period of our return from the Crimea, the disturbances in Holland had but just began to break out; but no one could, as yet, foresee the extraordinary result of them.

The activity and firmness displayed by the French ministry, during the American war, its late dignified conduct in arresting the ambition of Joseph II, left no room for suspecting that a government could pass in so short a time, from the height of energy to the lowest degree of weakness, and thus resign in a moment, the consideration it had acquired by such brilliant success.

The only object, in fact, which was then calculated to inspire some alarm, was the misunderstanding lately arisen between Russia and the Porte; and even, in this respect, I had many

grounds for dismissing all apprehension; the personal embarrassment of the Emperor in Brabant, the scarcity prevailing in Russia, the pacific assurances of the ministers of the Empress, and, in short, the tranquillising despatches of the Count de Choiseul, written subsequently to M. de Bulgakoff's arrival at Constantinople, all combined to warrant a hope that the peace would not be disturbed.

I was apprized, however, that the Grand Vizier, at the instigation of the ministers of England and Prussia, had given an unfriendly reception to M. de Bulgakoff, and replied, with sullen pride, to his first overtures. But M. de Choiseul flattered himself, that this obstacle might be defeated, and that it would not be impracticable to obtain the removal of a Vizier, whose blindness might effect the ruin of the Ottoman empire.

Under these circumstances, as I could discover no essential grounds for prolonging my stay in Russia, I determined to take advantage of the leave of absence which had been granted to me; I was confirmed in my resolution by the arrival at St. Petersburgh, of the Chevalier de Sainte-Croix, who was sent there by M. de Montmorin, to perform the duties of Chargé d'Affaires during my absence.

Accordingly, I took leave of the Empress on the 5th of September, 1787, and left with M. de Sainte-Croix, an explanatory note, in order to put him in possession of the preceding and the

actual state of the King's affairs at the court of Russia.

The conclusion of this note was in the form of an account to his Majesty and his council, wherein I submitted what had occurred during the period of my mission, the efforts made to render our mediation alike indispensible to the Empress and useful to the Porte; in short, a rapid sketch, combining in a few pages, the details of our misunderstandings, and our political intercourse with Russia, since the accession of Catherine to the throne.

I was about to step into my carriage, on my way back to France, with all that agitation of delight, which is felt on returning to one's native country and to one's friends after a long absence, when I received a message from the Empress: that Princess invited me to dinner, although I had already taken leave of her, and requested I would postpone my departure for a few days.

I obeyed her commands; on rising from table, I followed her to the Theatre of the Hermitage; and the Princess drawing me aside when the performance was over, addressed me in these words: "Do you know, Count, that I am "perhaps on the eve of being forced, against my "will, into a war with the Turks? They have "threatened to send my minister to the Seven "Towers, according to the gentle custom of "these barbarians, when they intend to de-"clare war."

"I have learned, Madam," I replied, "that "some foreign ministers had, in fact, given advices "of a hostile nature to the Porte. M. de Choiseul "is, however, of opinion that this momentary heat "of passion will soon be dispelled by the firm- "ness and wise moderation of your Majesty, and "by the justice of the conciliatory proposals which "you are making to the Grand Seignior and which "are warmly supported by the Emperor's Inter- "nuncio, and by the King's Ambassador."

"It is very true," rejoined Catherine, "that "M. de Choiseul evinces great zeal in this matter. "I am informed that he is seriously offended with "the Turks; that he considers them absolutely "mad, and uses every endeavor to bring them "back to reason."

I availed myself of this opportunity to assure the Empress of the sincerity of the King's sentiments, and that he would always exert his influence with the Porte, to promote at that court the conciliatory views of her imperial Majesty, to procure redress for the wrongs of which she might have to complain, and to preserve peace between both Empires.

"At present, Madam," I added, "the minds of "the Mussulmans are violently agitated by the "pernicious instigations of the English and "Prussian ministers, who possess the Grand "Vizier's confidence; and so long as this Vizier "retains his place, the success of Messieurs de "Bulgakoff, de Choiseul and de Herbert, in their "negociations, must remain doubtful."

" I agree with you, said the Empress; but " were we to succeed in procuring the removal of " the Grand Vizier, all would not have been ac- " complished. The Reis-Effendi is no less " violent and ill disposed towards us. Their " armaments have occasioned them such heavy " expences, that they are in dread of the fury " of the people, who will think all the money lost " unless the peace be interrupted. I should not " therefore, be surprised to learn, by the next " courier, that they have declared war against " me. I certainly do not desire, neither do I " fear it."

" It is no doubt impossible, Madam," I replied, " to foresee, with any degree of certainty, what " may be the resolution of such a government as " that of Turkey. But the season, which is far " advanced, will perhaps afford them time for " changing their minds and their ministers, and " for considering how senseless it would be to " double their expenses, as a justification for in- " curring any. Had they seen, as I have done, " the troops and the fleets of your Majesty, they " would not feel such anxiety to encounter them."

I saw Catherine's ministers on the following day; they did not believe so much in a war. " The Divan," they said, " which lately appeared " so apprehensive of an attack from us, would be " mad, if rushing on a sudden from the extreme " of fear to that of temerity, they were hastily to " declare war against us: it is most probable " that the winter will be taken up in negociations."

They added, in short, in order to convince me of the sincerity of the Empress, "that Catherine the "Second was so determined to satisfy the King "and all Europe of her desire to preserve peace, "that she would take no notice of the unseemly "arrogance of the Porte's language and of its "insolence in fixing a period for repairing the "pretended grievances of which it complained; "that M. de Bulgakoff had, in consequence, been "authorized to relax, in this negociation, upon all "points not incompatible with her imperial Ma-"jesty's dignity, and to agree to the suggestions "proposed by M. de Choiseul in the interest of "the Turks themselves, in order to remove every "difficulty to an understanding."

In this manner we were occupied at St. Petersburgh in endeavors to avert the storm which had, during four years, been hanging over our heads; when a courier arrived, on the 12th September, and dispelled, on a sudden, all our illusions, by informing us that the storm had burst in a quarter where it had been least expected. It was no longer Russia that threatened the Ottoman empire; the Ottoman empire threatened Russia. The councils of England and Prussia prevailed. The Grand Seignior had ordered the Russian Minister to be shut up in the Seven Towers, and had declared war against Russia.

I was no sooner apprised of that important event than I gave up all idea of my departure, and dispatched a courier to M. de Montmorin for fresh instructions. "Matters," I told him, "have

" assumed a more critical appearance than we had " apprehended. Prussia and England have thrown " the first spark of a fire which, increasing as it " proceeds, may extend over all Europe. How- " ever indispensible I had deemed the leave of " absence which I had solicited and obtained, I " cannot now avail myself of it, but shall consider " it of non-effect; I remain at my post, and ear- " nestly hope that the King will be pleased to " consider this conduct as an earnest of my zeal."

The letters of M. de Choiseul, aud the despatches of the Austrian Internuncio to Count Cobentzel, soon furnished me with the details of so sudden a revolution in the system of the Divan. At no time had there been a greater reliance on the prospect of peace than when the Turks determined upon declaring war.

Faithful to her promise, the Empress had authorized M. de Bulgakoff to adopt all the expedients suggested by our Ambassador: Russia waved the point respecting the drawing up of the firman addressed to the Pacha of Achalsig; she was satisfied with the promises given by the Porte to keep the Kuban Tartars within bounds. The infractions made, in regard to the salt of the Crimea, and to the Zaporavians, were entirely overlooked.

Russia, it is true, refused to give up Maurocordato, but desisted, at the same time, from claiming the surrender of Russian deserters. The Porte procured the redress of abuses committed by Consuls in the Archipelago, on the condition of

restoring the Russian vessels taken by the Barbary powers.

This is what I had succeeded, with M. de Cobentzel, in obtaining from Catherine. Couriers were about to convey that satisfactory convention to Constantinople, Versailles and Vienna, when the courier, despatched by M. de Herbert, informed us of the violent measures taken by the Grand Seignior against the Russian Minister, notwithstanding the interference of the French Ambassador, and of the imperial Internuncio, who intreated the Ottoman ministry to wait for the replies which were expected from St. Petersburgh.

The Vice-Chancellor, in communicating to me those extraordinary events, by order of the Empress, conveyed her warm acknowledgments for the good offices she had received from the King on the occasion.

Catherine trusted that the King would do justice to the efforts she had made to preserve peace, and to the readiness with which she had yielded to every suggestion made by our court, in order to avert a rupture.

That Princess was reluctantly compelled to oppose force to force ; but she trusted, at least, that she had proved to the King's satisfaction, that the act of aggression could not be laid to her charge.

Count Bezborodko, having requested I should call upon him, repeated to me the same assurances. " Whilst," he said, " we were exerting, " in concert with you, every means that wisdom " could suggest to preserve peace, the ministers

" of Prussia and of England were defeating our " efforts by their intrigues, and alarming the " Grand Vizier and the Reis-Effendi on the pre- " cariousness of their own position; they repre- " sented our treaty of commerce with France as " an offensive alliance; our armaments in the " South as indications of an approaching invasion; " in short, they inflamed all their passions in " order to drive them into a war, and, at the same " time, allayed their fears as to the issue of that " war, by exaggerating the Emperor's embarrass- " ments occasioned by the disturbances in Bra- " bant, as well as those to which a scarcity was " exposing us.

" Accordingly, and to our great astonishment, " M. de Bulgakoff had no sooner arrived at Con- " stantinople, from Sevastopol, when the Porte, " instead of continuing the negociations upon the " hitherto contested points, arrogantly demanded " the restitution of the Crimea, and threatened to " throw our minister into prison, if a satisfactory " answer, in this respect, was not received within a " very short time.

" You perceive," he added, " that there never " was a more palpable aggression; and yet I can " assure you, that, at this very moment, the Em- " press, though highly offended, does not enter- " tain the idea of upsetting the Ottoman Empire; " that she only desires to obtain a proper satis- " faction for the injury just offered to her; that, " in furtherance of this object, she relies upon the " King's friendship; and that if, by means of his

" interference, the Porte brought back to reason, " will turn a deaf ear to pernicious advices, release " M. de Bulgakoff from confinement, and offer a " reparation for the insult, her Majesty will con- " sent to renew the negociations on the same " basis which they had assumed previously to the " interruption of peace."

As I could not foresee what might be the King's views under circumstances of so novel a nature, I abstained from saying more in reply, than that I would forward to his Majesty the communications made to me, together with the renewed assurances of pacific dispositions in which her imperial Majesty so nobly persevered.

I informed the minister that I waited at St. Petersburgh for instructions from my court. " I " can only," I added, " assure the Empress be- " fore-hand that the King will learn, with deep " concern, the fresh rupture he was so anxious " to prevent; and will be found disposed, at all " times, to exert his best efforts for the restora- " tion of tranquillity, and for putting an end, as " soon as possible, to a war that might ultimately " prove fatal to the repose of Europe."

It is undoubtedly true, that the Ottoman ministry, deceived by dangerous councils, was guilty of an unaccountable act of folly, and was incurring, without a cause, the risk of misfortunes and losses which it might have easily avoided.

But we must also candidly acknowledge that the English and Prussians would never have had it in their power to lead the pride and igno-

rance of the Mussulmans into so fatal an error, had not Prince Potemkin at first intimidated, and afterwards irritated the Porte, by the threatening language he had anteriorly dictated to M. de Bulgakoff, and by the pompous and unnecessary display of troops collected together for the purpose of embellishing the triumphal train of Catherine.

It ought, besides, to have appeared quite clear at this time that England, informed of the crisis of our internal condition, considered it a favorable moment for humbling us, and for resuming her preponderating influence in Europe. She accordingly endeavored to obstruct us with enemies and with embarrassments in every direction, secure as she was of succeeding, if we were rendered timid by the dearth of our finances, or of increasing our distress by involving us in a general war.

In furtherance of this object, after she had firmly bound the new King of Prussia to her system, she subjected us to the alternative of falling out with the Porte, in case we did not take part with it, or of breaking our fresh engagements with Russia, if we continued our support to the Turks.

She likewise placed us under the necessity of fighting against the Prussians, whom she was prepared to defend, or of abandoning Holland to their sway; lastly, she was drawing down upon us the resentment of the Emperor, if we should cease to make common cause with him at the very moment when the Cabinets of St. James's and of

Berlin were strongly suspected of fomenting the disturbances in Brabant.

Our situation was becoming very critical; this was the time for our court to take a bold and decisive part; a vigorous and determined conduct would then, in all appearance, have had the effect of disconcerting our enemies, of quieting the alarm in Holland, of checking the attempts of Prussia, of bringing the Porte back to reason, and thus forcing, into an outward direction, that active fermentation of the public mind which was working in France, and which must infallibly be fed by some occupation from without, or by an internal explosion.

A four-fold alliance might easily have been concluded between Spain, the two Imperial Courts, and ourselves; their common interest inclined them to it. The idea occurred to the King, as well as to my father, and to M. de Castries; but these two ministers did not long retain their influence.

The newly acquired influence of the Archbishop of Toulouse in the council, banished all comprehensive views from it, and substituted intrigue in lieu of sound policy; there was no character in their decisions; they forgot that all the cleverness of a government consists in firmness and good faith.

Without, as well as within, there was weakness in the mode of resistance, and all absence of grace and dignity in yielding; plans no sooner formed than laid aside, were never followed up;

the passions felt that they were no longer kept within bounds. As the pilots steered without any science or foresight, the vessel of the state was placed at the mercy of winds and waves.

In Europe, our rivals ceased to fear us, and our friends to reckon upon us, or even to reckon us as a power. France exhibited a scene of conflict between ancient prejudices, new principles, classes, orders, public bodies, interests and opinions. We rushed upon the breakers that destroyed us.

In short, with the precipice before us, upon which we were driven by the current, we only found our regeneration and safety in a revolution, now become unavoidable; a revolution which all contributed to bring on, and which, in imitation of Medea, could not restore us to youth, except by tearing our very vitals and steeping us in blood.

A short account will develope the afflicting succession of those events, the forerunners of the dreadful shocks which threw Europe into confusion, and the vibrations of which will yet be long felt.

War having been declared between the Russians and the Turks, it was of importance to know what measures would be adopted on the occasion by each of the great European powers.

It was easy to foresee what would be the conduct of the Emperor; it was marked out by the aggression of the Turks, and by the stipulations of his treaty of alliance with Catherine; he would therefore unite his forces with those of Russia.

England had only urged the Porte into a war with the hope of being applied to for her mediation towards obtaining peace; her influence would thereby destroy ours at Constantinople as well as at St. Petersburgh.

The intentions of Prussia were of a more doubtful nature: it had lost the great sovereign to whose genius it was indebted for its power and glory: Frederick had died in the preceding year; his nephew, Frederick William II, did not yet shew whether he was adequate to the task of worthily sustaining the heaviest of all weights, the name and inheritance of a great man.

It could just be perceived that the influence of the British councils prevailed in his mind above every other. His ministers received orders to act, on all occasions, in concert with those of England. They consequently followed the same course of intrigues at Constantinople, in order to defeat our negociations for the maintenance of peace; whilst at Petersburgh they were disavowing those intrigues.

The Baron de Keller renewed, in the name of his master, the protestations of sincere interest in the success of her Imperial Majesty's arms. This Princess ironically replied to him, "that "it was very easy for the King of Prussia to give "proofs of that interest, by punctually fulfilling "the engagements stipulated in the old treaty of "alliance, which had not yet expired."

It was known, beforehand, that Spain, Naples, Denmark and the King of Sardinia would pre-

serve a neutrality, which was enjoined to them by their position and their means.

Little uneasiness was felt in regard to Sweden; it was not then foreseen that Gustavus III, with an army of thirty thousand men, would soon have the boldness to attack the Russian giant.

The cabinet of St. Petersburgh was principally interested in ascertaining, whether our government would assume a friendly or a hostile attitude towards it, or whether it would maintain a system of neutrality. It would have eagerly sought an union with us, but was apprehensive of our old alliance with the Porte: there still existed an illusion respecting us; the remembrance of our successes in America made them still attach great weight to our power.

But the wavering disposition of our councils already indicated our weakness; I had not yet received any instructions to enable me to inspire the Russian ministry with apprehensions, or to feed its hopes. We had not even declared our neutrality, however self evident it appeared as a measure of necessity, if we wished to preserve our honor as mediators, to retain our influence and prevent all connection between England and Russia.

I was, therefore, compelled, by this false position, to act with the utmost circumspection, and to speak only in vague terms: my activity was limited to the object of properly attending to the orders I had received, carefully to watch the measures of the Empress, as well as the impres-

sion made upon her policy by the audacious proceedings of England and Prussia, by the moderate councils of the Emperor, who found himself reluctantly forced into the war, and by that procrastination in our court which it was difficult to define.

I learned that the English were inviting the Russian ministry to uphold the Stadtholder in Holland; in return for which they offered their mediation to compel the Turks to a peace of which they ridiculously attributed the interruption to us.

The Empress was too much incensed at their artifices to give any credit to their insinuations. They were not, however, wholly ineffectual; for, a few days afterwards, Count Bezborodko and M. de Marcoff reproached me, in rather bitter terms, with having advised the Turks to take up arms whilst we were at Kioff. "From thence," they said, "have sprung up all the misunder-
"standings which, by exciting the public mind,
"have occasioned the present rupture."

"Those armaments," I replied, "were wholly
"of a defensive nature; your own armaments
"had given rise to them; and, if it were not
"superfluous to recall the past, it would be much
"more correct to attribute the hostilities of the
"Turks to the fears which they entertained, to
"the collecting of your army along the Euxine,
"to the triumphal journey of the Empress, to the
"warlike display of Sevastopol, to the rather
"warm language of M. de Bulgakoff, and to that

" threatening inscription which was pointed out " to us on one of the gates of Kherson: *This is* " *the road leading to Byzantum.* The only thing " beyond my comprehension," I added, " is that " the English and Prussian councils could, in so " short a time, operate such a sudden revolution " at the Porte, and change its state of terror " into one of temerity."

I was soon apprised, by the ministers as well as by M. de Herbert's dispatches, of the details of that unexpected change. The Grand Seignior appeared at first determined for peace; he could have wished to take upon himself the direction of affairs; he attended at the council, and urged the progress of the negociations. On a sudden, the Grand Vizier rekindles in his heart two passions generally all-powerful with the Turks; fanaticism, which bereaves of reason, and fear, which hurls one headlong into the very danger it is attempted to avoid.

A grand council, or *mouschavert*, is convoked on the 13th of August. The Grand Seignior enjoins the utmost secresy to its members. Excommunication is threatened against all who might attempt to betray it.

At the close of a deliberation from which pride, anger and ignorance have banished all sense of reason, M. de Bulgakoff is invited to a conference.

The Internuncio felt uneasy at this unexpected invitation; he demanded the object of it. They arrogantly answered, that the business did not concern him. " Recollect," said M. de Herbert

in reply, " that M. de Bulgakoff is the minister " of the Emperor's ally, and that both Empe- " rors have but one common interest."—" *Olsun,* " (or be it so)," rejoined the Turkish officer in a disdainful manner; " but the Grand Vizier alone " can explain his intentions."

The Internuncio then made a direct application to the Grand Vizier Youssouf-Pacha, and waited upon him; but he was unable to obtain access into his residence; he was referred to the Reis-Effendi.

M. de Choiseul's measures were in unison with those of the Internuncio; they wrote in energetic terms to the Reis-Effendi, who disdained to reply to them; they were reduced to the necessity of protesting against such strange proceedings, and gave warning of the fatal consequences to which they might eventually lead.

M. de Bulgakoff repaired alone to the audience; the Grand Vizier, after addressing him in terms of strong reproach, proposed that he should instantly consent to the restitution of the Crimea. In order that he might have time to prepare his answer, he was led into another apartment, instead of being allowed to return home.

The Russian minister having refused, as in duty bound, to listen to so extravagant a proposal, was about to retire; but the Grand Vizier after reminding him that he had threatened last winter to cause the Ottoman territory to be invaded by sixty thousand men collected by Prince Potemkin, declared that, from this moment, all treaty

was at an end, and announced to him the resolution which the Grand Seignior had taken to remove him to the Seven Towers with such persons of his suite as the minister might select.

M. de Bulgakoff named a secretary, three dragomans and two servants; the remainder of his suite returned to Pera.

The Porte assigned to the captive minister an allowance for his support, and an officer to wait upon him; he received permission to send for his furniture and personal effects, and an elegant pavillion was constructed to enable him to enjoy the fresh air.

It was in vain that MM. de Choiseul and de Herbert renewed their protestations against this infringement of the law of nations; their endeavors, their entreaties, their threats were alike disregarded.

M. de Bulgakoff was conducted to the Seven Towers mounted on a horse covered with splendid trappings; a numerous guard went before and followed him.

Shortly afterwards, the former Khan of the Crimea, Sahim-Guerray, was strangled at Rhodes, as a punishment for his ancient concessions to Russia. The Turks retained his brother Arslan at Constantinople, as a phantom of a Khan hereafter destined to revive the hopes and the courage of the Tartars.

Deaf to the advices of our Ambassador, the Turks neglected none of the means that were most calculated to affix all the blame upon them.

Their manifesto was perfectly extravagant; instead of pretending just causes of uneasiness, they urged no others than an alleged demand made by Russia that Bessarabia and the Crimea should be ceded to her; now the latter had been secured these many years back by a treaty, and there never had been any question of the former.

Finally the Divan, for the purpose of placing its aggression beyond all doubt, after having thrown the Russian minister into prison, ordered the Turkish fleet in the Liman to attack the Russian frigate *Scorey* or *Rapid.*

This frigate, assisted by a brig, warmly repelled the attack of the Turks, penetrated through their fleet, unrigged several ships, and got into Sevastopol without suffering any loss.

On the one hand the vast assemblage of troops, which the Russians had been collecting during eight months, and on the other the violence of Turkish fanaticism, could not fail to be the forerunners of prompt operations and of rapid events.

The contrary was the case: the Turks lost much time in gathering together their scattered Asiatic forces; and Prince Potemkin, always singular, indicated as much indolence for fighting, as he had been hasty in threatening.

Forty thousand men were sent against the Tartars of Kuban, and the nations of the Caucasus; thirty thousand watched over the defense of the Crimea, and forty thousand were cantoned from Kherson to the Bug.

The Prince, who commanded them, established

his head quarters at Elizabeth, where he waited for the reserve which was to be sent to him.

Romanzoff collected seventy thousand men, near Kioff. To my great astonishment, in short, I heard the Empress announce that she would be compelled to remain the whole winter on the defensive, as she was informed that three hundred and eighty thousand Turks were to advance towards Bessarabia.

The Grand Vizier's head quarters were already at Andrinople. The Porte had directed Mansour to make an appeal to arms, and to collect all the Tartar tribes under his standards.

Under these circumstances a reconciliation took place between Marshal Romanzoff and Prince Potemkin, who very properly buried all their previous misunderstandings in oblivion. The Prince made the first advances; he wrote to the Marshal that, considering himself as his pupil, he solicited his advice, or rather was prepared to obey his orders.

The Empress issued her manifesto; it was drawn up in a style remarkable for its noble dignity and wise moderation; the folly of the Turks had made this an easy task.

Catherine was impatient to obtain intelligence that might throw some light on the intentions of France. At last I received a courier from Versailles on the 2nd of October; he had expected to find me in Vienna, and was bringing me an order to return to St. Petersburgh. It may well be supposed how much I was pleased at not

having taken my departure, and at having thus foreseen the intentions of my government.

This anxiety, on the part of the French ministry, produced on the Russian cabinet, a livelier sensation than I could have desired. What was eagerly wished for, was readily believed; it was hoped that we should declare against the Turks, who had just spurned our advice, and blindly followed that of England. Unfortunately, this was not the case; our ministry persisted in irresolute measures, and continued to enjoin me a circumspection which it mistook for prudence, and which, in reality, was pure weakness.

Pressed on all sides with questions, I stated that the courier having departed at the moment when the King was informed of M. de Bulgakoff's detention, M. de Montmorin had not had time to convey any other order to me, than that I should inform the ministers of Catherine, of the strong impression produced on the King's mind by that extraordinary event, and assure them that he had sent to M. de Choiseul the most pressing injunctions to procure that M. de Bulgakoff should be set at liberty.

The Empress was astonished at so cold a communication; but she still hoped that the intrigues of England in Turkey, in Holland, and even in Russia, under a concert with Prussia, in order to deprive us of every influence, would finish by exhausting our patience, and would make us determine to oppose powerful alliances to the me-

nacing league which was beginning to be formed against us.

As, however, it is of no use to continue a conversation with people who appear decided to remain silent, the Russian ministers ceased to urge me into a departure from that character of reserve which was enjoined to me : I confined myself, therefore, during a short time, to the object of redoubling my endeavors, in order to preserve unimpaired the favor with which the Empress was pleased to honor me.

This Princess admitted me more than ever in the intimacy of her society ; she often invited me to dinner, and allowed me, almost every day, to attend her at a performance that took place in her palace of the Hermitage.

The sight of this Hermitage rather contrasted with the name given to it : for one was struck, on entering it, with the grandeur of the apartments and galleries of which it was composed, with the splendor of its furniture, the great number of pictures from the first masters that adorned it, and the pleasant winter garden, where the verdure, the flowers, the chirping of birds, created the illusion of an Italian spring transported into the heart of the polar ice.

A most select library sufficiently indicated that the hermit of this spot had a greater inclination for the lights of philosophy than for monkish observances.

It also presented, in some respects, a course of

animated history, in the most complete medallic collection of all countries and of all ages.

Lastly, at the further end of this palace, was an elegant theatre, built on a small scale, after the antique model of the theatre at Vicenza; it was in a semi-circular form, without boxes, and offered to the eye nothing more than an amphitheatre of steps.

Once only every fortnight, during winter, the Empress invited to the theatre the diplomatic body and every person presented at court. At other times, the number of spectators was limited to about a dozen persons; these were generally the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess, the Aide-de-Camp Momonoff, the Master of the Horse, the High Chamberlain, Count Strogonoff, the Vice-Chancellor, Count Bezborodko, Prince Potemkin, his niece the Countess Skawronski, Mademoiselle Protasoff, Cobentzel the ambassador, the Prince de Ligne and myself.

Mr. Fitz-Herbert had taken his departure: politically speaking, I could not but rejoice at it; as in the present aspect of affairs, I should have found him a formidable adversary by his wit, his cleverness, and the affection with which he had inspired the Empress; his absence was, however, painful to me, for I was bound to him by the ties of a warm and sincere friendship.

The Grand Duke and Grand Duchess seldom availed themselves of the permission they had to come to the Hermitage; Princess d'Arshkoff was still less frequently seen there; her cutting and

haughty disposition was ill-suited to the character of Catherine.

That proud woman appeared to have been formed by an error of nature; she partook more of our sex than of her own. Exaggerating the part she had taken in the accession of the Empress to the throne, she exclusively arrogated to herself the wretched honor of that revolution which she was always relating during her travels.

Accordingly, in the early days of the reign of her Sovereign, she had exhibited a boundless ambition, had asked for the command of a regiment of guards, and perhaps even flattered herself with obtaining a place in the ministry. But Catherine the Second, who was little disposed to allow of her governing the empire, received with irony her importunate applications, as I was told by Prince Potemkin, and then, bringing her back to pretensions more in accordance with her turn of mind, appointed her to be the directress of the academy she had recently founded.

Pains had been taken to bring over, from France, a good company of comedians, by order of the Empress. Those whom I saw, presented a reunion of first-rate talents: amongst the number was Aufrene the famous actor; some renowned composers and virtuosi, Paesiello at first, and afterwards Cimarosa, Sarti, Marchesi the singer, and Madame Todi, were the delight, not only of the Empress, whose ear was quite insensible to harmony, but of Prince Potemkin and of many enlightened amateurs.

Catherine the Second was desirous of going through a complete course of our theatrical productions; every night, there was, in her presence, a representation of one of the plays of Moliere or of Regnard. But it would be difficult to express the great embarrassment of our poor actors on the first days, when compelled to perform on a spacious theatre, having before them a magnificent saloon well lighted up, the solitude of which was interrupted by the presence of ten or twelve spectators. On those occasions, the most unanimous applauses did not make a very encouraging noise, and this was assuredly an occasion for weighing the suffrages instead of counting them.

The Empress had requested that I would read to her a tragedy of *Coriolanus*, which I had composed on board the ship that brought me back from America. Her indulgence was pronounced upon this work in so favorable a manner, that she insisted upon its being represented.

In vain I opposed her wishes; she insisted; I merely obtained permission, that the representation should only take place in presence of the select circle of the Empress.

This was promised to me; and my *Coriolanus* was accordingly performed two or three times, before a public consisting of a dozen spectators, amongst whom I had no cabal to apprehend. The applause was, therefore, general, and the author was called for.

It is well known, however, that the promises of courts are but slight; and no prudent man should

rely upon them; but, however deceived I had been, my secret remained unrevealed; and although it was the secret of the comedy, nothing of it transpired at the time.

On a particular Thursday, I was invited to the grand performance at the Hermitage, with the diplomatic body and the entire court. I arrive; the Empress calls me to her presence; she makes me sit at her feet, on the step immediately below her own. The curtain rises; the actors make their appearance; and, to my great astonishment, I discover that they are performing my tragedy.

Never, in my life, was I so much embarrassed; I stood quite mute and motionless, with eyes fixed like a statue. But, on a sudden, the Empress, with both her hands, lays hold of mine, and then compels me to applaud my own work.

After this polite joke, it behoved me to muster up courage, and receive, as well as I could, when the representation was over, the numerous compliments which every one felt bound, in courtesy, to bestow.

The next day the Empress laughed at my fear, and was beginning to bestow praises upon my tragedy, when I adopted the only suitable course left to me, that of criticising my own drama, and pointing out its numerous faults.

" I shall now give you a proof," said her Majesty to me with that grace, which never failed to win the hearts of those whose good opinion she condescended to court, " I shall give you a proof " that you have merited my applause, if not by

" the beauty of the verses, of which I am but an " indifferent judge, at least by the exalted ideas " and sentiments they convey. Now for the " proof: you know I have not a poetic ear; here " is, however, a passage in your tragedy, which " I have retained in my memory." She recited the following verses:

" Une honteuse paix n'est qu'un affront sanglant
Que le peuple vaincu supporte en frémissant:
Elle aigrit son courroux: jamais il ne l'endure
Que le temps qu'il lui faut pour guérir sa blessure;
Il l'accepte par crainte, il la rompt sans remords,
Et les dieux qu'il parjure approuvent ses efforts.
Alors, des deux côtés, une fureur cruelle
Rend la guerre sanglante et la haine immortelle,
Porte l'épuisement, l'effroi, l'oppression,
L'esclavage, l'opprobre, et la destruction.
Voilà les tristes fruits de toute paix honteuse,
Loi toujours sans effet, trève toujours trompeuse."

It will be seen, that these political ideas, which might be in accordance with the taste of the Empress, had contributed, no less than her kindness, to deceive her in regard to the poor merit of the diplomatic poet.

That Princess occasionally asked me, with a rather ironical smile, if I had received any news from France; at last, she one day informed me of the entrance of the Prussian troops into Holland, and seemed greatly apprehensive that our troops might not arrive in time to prevent the consequences of that invasion.

Her fear was but too well grounded: after lengthened deliberations in the King's council, the firmness of the war and marine ministers appeared to prevail over the timid circumspection of the Archbishop of Toulouse, lately appointed president of the council of finances; and Louis XVI. who was naturally brave, though of a pacific disposition, had resolved upon promising to the Dutch, the support of his troops.

He had, accordingly, desired my father to adopt the necessary measures for assembling an army, which was to be formed at Givet, and to present him with a statement of the funds requisite for taking the field without delay.

The statement was soon prepared; but in vain my father attempted to present it at each sitting of the council: in spite of all his efforts, seconded by those of Marshal de Castries, the important decision, which could alone set every thing in motion, was delayed from day to day.

The assembling of the French army formed the only topic of conversation in France and in the neighbouring countries: and yet not a single standard approached the walls of Givet.

My father afterwards related to me an anecdote which may explain that unaccountable irresolution and wavering, and may also instruct those who attempt to write the history of all great events occurring on the stage of the world, without being acquainted with the actors, or without having seen them behind the scenes, that those

events often spring out of trifling and almost frivolous causes, which exercise an influence over matters of the highest importance.

M. de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, wholly devoid of those high qualities that constitute a good bishop and a clever statesman, was gifted with that keen, frivolous, and easy wit, which secures undoubted success in society.

It happened unfortunately that, at this time, reputations were acquired, and high places distributed through the influence of a brilliant and select society, which exclusively claimed for itself the name of *good company*.

Too frivolous to distinguish between profound talent and the mere surface of it, between intrigue and true policy, it was easily led away by false appearances and generally mistook what was called amiability, for real merit.

The Archbishop of Toulouse who had been, in his youth, on terms of intimacy with M. Turgot and with some advocates of the system of œconomists, had displayed, at the states of Languedoc, an easy elocution, a gentle gravity of character and a conciliating mind. In the saloons of Paris he spoke well upon public affairs to those who knew nothing of them, though they dissembled their ignorance.

Some ladies of considerable wit, such as Mesdames de Tessé, de Beauvau, de Montesson, created the political fame of this prelate. M. Necker's friends set up the Archbishop in opposition to M. de Calonne. In the assembly of nota-

bles, he acquired the support of the clergy, by upholding its privileges, and, at the same time, he obtained for a moment, by his resistance to the minister's plans, the confidence of a few patriots, even that of M. de La Fayette, whom he afterwards deceived.

On the other hand, notwithstanding the King's well known aversion to his prime ministers, and especially to priests who meddled in temporal matters, he hoped to attain his object by the credit of a friend of inferior rank, the Abbé de Vermont.

On a former occasion, he had persuaded the Duke de Choiseul to send that Abbé to Vienna, with the mission of instructing the archduchess Maria Antoinette in the principles of the French language.

When that Princess ascended the throne, she continued to bestow part of her confidence upon the Abbé. The Archbishop rendered the credit of the latter available to himself; and the faithful agent constantly praised him in his private intercourse with the Queen.

Such were the means by which, after smoothing every obstacle in the way of his ambition, he was raised to the ministry, when M. de Calonne, defeated by the parliaments and by the notables, beheld the destruction of his magic wand, and disappeared.

The question was no longer of intriguing, but of governing: M. de Brienne, holding the reins of the state, was a stranger to any other but the low expedients he had employed to attain that high

station. He was incapable of surmounting any obstacles, and he attempted to avoid encountering them. His weakness was startled at every important measure: and if he could not prevent the adoption of one, he exerted all his pretended cleverness to retard or paralize the execution of it. He therefore saw, with deep concern, that the King was resolved upon supporting Holland, his ally, by force of arms, against the aggressions of the English and Prussians.

The embarrassments which a new war must necessarily occasion to the minister of finances, appeared to him insurmountable; and, without reflecting upon the humiliating part to which he was about to subject our court, he directed all his endeavors to retard, as much as possible, the hour of incurring expences, and of commencing hostilities.

We now come to the strange and ridiculous means which he adopted, and with full success: the King, from sympathy of virtue and of goodness, was personally attached to M. de Malesherbes, a minister of state, lately recalled to the council. M. de Malesherbes, like most men, had his weak side: this was, to feel delight in relating the numberless anecdotes with which his fertile memory supplied him; and it must be acknowledged that no one related better than he did. He won every heart, when he told a story, by the sound philosophy of his reason, by his good-natured character, and by the sharp, though gentle, keenness of his wit. When he once began, it was

difficult for him to stop, and no one, amongst his auditory, was disposed to interrupt him.

I have stated already that my father, being anxious to obtain the decision and signature which he was soliciting, submitted the point to the deliberation of the council at every sitting; the Archbishop would thereupon dexterously question M. de Malesherbes in respect to any former event bearing some analogy to the present circumstances; and a story from the latter would immediately follow. In vain the two Marshals attempted to put an end to this episode; the King delighted to listen to him. The story would grow lengthy; the hours passed on; it was late when the discussion commenced, and the principal business was adjourned to another council.

It will hardly be credited that four sittings, or the space of fifteen days, were lost in this manner. The discussion on the measures to be taken was but just concluded, when intelligence was received of the precipitate invasion of the Duke of Brunswick, of the terror of the Dutch, the defection of their commander, the Prince de Salm, the capture of their towns, and the full accomplishment of a revolution which subjected the Republic to the Stadtholder and to England.

How far the Archbishop's judgment had given way to his fears will readily be seen by bearing in mind the expressions publicly used by the Duke of Brunswick a short time afterwards: "The King of Prussia," he said, "still hesitated "about engaging in a war with France, which

" might draw down upon him the forces of Aus-
" tria, her ally. It behoved me, therefore, to act
" with the utmost circumspection. I sent two
" officers of my staff to reconnoitre Givet; if
" they had found there a camp, I intended to
" have stopped; but as they could not discover a
" single standard, or a tent, I hastened my march,
" and Holland was conquered."

We cannot but deplore the condition of states that are compromised by such faults. The Prelate to whom we were indebted for this degradation was raised to the station of Prime Minister, and the two Marshals, who were anxious to preserve our glory unsullied, gave in their resignation, as they could not submit to serve under the Archbishop's orders.

It must, however, be owned that, at the moment when the news of the conquest of Holland, and of the fatal consequences of our inexcusable procrastination, was made known, French honor was not silent; the cry, *to arms*, was heard in the palace of our Kings. In vain the English declared they would fight in support of the Stadtholder; we armed our ships, and M. de Montmorin took every necessary measure for opposing a formidable counter-alliance to the Anglo-Prussian league.

The moment was still favorable; all might yet be repaired; war would have been a useful diversion at this time, because it would have restored our influence, and carried, in an outward direction, the ardor of a young population, which was tired

of remaining quiet, and was, by its fiery activity, incessantly adding to the internal fermentation of the public mind.

I was informed, in confidence, by a person devoted to the French cause, and well initiated in the secrets of the Empress, that this Princess became, every day, more irritated against the English.

"It appears to me impossible," she said to him, "that France can avoid a war provoked by "England and Prussia. Those two powers have "fomented disturbances in Brabant, and a rup- "ture at Constantinople, in order to give occu- "pation to the Emperor and to deprive Louis "XVI of his support; but it is in the power of "the King to defeat their intrigues by firmness of "conduct; and, if he does not commit the fault of "offending Russia, by protecting the Turks, he "may rely upon my friendship, and upon the "assistance of the Emperor, as well as of the "King of Spain."

"But, Madam," replied the individual she had been addressing, "you are aware that France "would apprehend danger to her commercial "interests, if she permitted the ruin of the Otto- "man empire."

"But I do not contemplate its ruin," rejoined Catherine; "if such were my intention, I should "not be prevented by the semi-assistance which "France affords in ships, engineers and artillery- "men. Besides, let her beware; I have every "certainty of regaining the friendship of England "the moment I express a desire for it."

I apprized M. de Montmorin of these facts, and of the haughty language held by the Chargé d'Affaires of England. He had just declared to the Russian ministers, that his court would make war upon France the moment she attempted to check the invasion of the Prussians; and that if the Empress, giving too ready belief to our false assertions against the conduct of the English ambassador at Constantinople, should continue to form a closer connection with the French, the old allies of the Turks, and in this manner to indispose England, her ally of twenty years, the latter would easily find in Sweden every resource which its commerce could afford to renounce in Russia.

As on this occasion Catherine told me, one day, that the English persisted in maintaining that they had not given any hostile advice to the Porte, I reminded the Princess that her own ministers at Kioff, and M. de Bulgakoff, at Kherson, had furnished me the proofs and details of the Anglo-Prussian intrigues, carried on for the purpose of defeating the pacific negociations of M. de Choiseul, and of the Emperor's Internuncio.

I was in hopes that such repeated information might have the effect of recalling our administration to some sense of energy. This expectation seemed, for a moment, on the eve of being realized; they appeared to have awakened out of their state of torpor. I received a courier, who brought me, at last, the long expected instructions.

Nevertheless, they still bore the impress of a hesitation and weakness very unsuitable to the

gravity of the pending circumstances. M. de Montmorin, after recalling to my mind the old prejudices of the Empress against France, and her ancient predeliction for England, told me that it was not probable the Princess was sincerely desirous of forming a close connection with us; that it would, therefore, be unbecoming the dignity of the King, that he should expose himself to a refusal which would have the effect of increasing the embarrassments of our position, and the boldness of our enemies.

He, however, enjoined that I should, dexterously, and without compromising the King, throw out hints of the possibility of concluding a treaty of four-fold alliance between Russia, the Emperor, France and Spain, in opposition to the Anglo-Prussian league.

With a view to conform to this timid policy of a government which was evidently apprehensive of engaging itself too far, I seized the pretext of communicating some intelligence received from M. de Choiseul, who had lately been making warm reproaches to the Turks on account of their aggression.

I waited upon Count Bezborodko, the minister who most enjoyed the intimate confidence of the Empress; and, after conversing with him respecting the negociations at Constantinople, the Duke of Brunswick's invasion of Holland, and the disturbances fomented by Prussia in Brabant, I hazarded my private opinion as to the necessity of guarding against the restless activity of the

cabinets of London and Berlin, which attempted to spread the seeds of discord from the South to the North of Europe.

" Their efforts," I said, " are evidently di-
" rected against the interests of France in Hol-
" land, against those of Austria in the Low
" Countries, and against the repose of the Em-
" press, whose influence is troublesome to them,
" and whom they would gladly deprive of the
" Crimea. Would not this be the moment for a
" right understanding, for drawing closer the ties
" between us, and for maintaining, by our union,
" the repose of Europe, which two ambitious
" powers are anxious to disturb ?"

" I am also of this opinion," answered the mi-
" nister; " but have you any reason for sup-
" posing that your government is of the same way
" of thinking ? This is what we should be most
" desirous of ascertaining, previously to making
" any overture to the Empress."

" Without discovering," I replied, " any thing
" positive on the subject in the despatches I have
" received, they indicate a desire of knowing, as
" much as possible, what may be her Imperial
" Majesty's inclinations on the subject. But, as
" all this is still very vague, I think it of conse-
" quence to the dignity of our respective Sove-
" reigns, that so important a matter should be
" conducted with the utmost secrecy. Accord-
" ingly, I abstained from mentioning it to the
" Vice-Chancellor, and would only communicate
" my ideas to yourself, because I am well aware

" of your prudence, of your correct judgment,
" and of the just confidence which the Empress
" reposes in you."

Dexterity and caution are not means that can be long resorted to with princes of an elevated, firm and decided character. The day after my conference with the minister, as I happened to be at the Hermitage, the Empress drew me aside and led me to the extremity of her gallery. Her eyes were sparkling with a glow of satisfaction which might be read in all her features.

" You have conversed yesterday," she said, " with Count Bezborodko. I was pleased with " what he told me. I perceive that the King " opens his eyes to the true means of disconcert- " ing the intrigues of those who wish to disturb " his repose and my own. I am quite ready to " conclude a useful alliance with him; I hope " he can rely upon the consent of Spain, and I " have no reason to entertain any doubt of the " Emperor.

" We already experienced, in 1756, the ad- " vantage of a similar alliance; the old treaty " will sufficiently point out the basis of the one " that might now be concluded. You, there- " fore, see that every thing depends upon your " own cabinet, and that it will afford me much " satisfaction to find it engaged in consolidating " its power against that of its rivals."

The Princess then informed me that the Russians had just gained a victory over the Turks at Kilbourn, that the latter had lost five thousand

men, and that she was expecting a despatch from Prince Potemkin with all the details of the engagement. " The Emperor," she added, " has " collected his army, and will soon lay siege to " Belgrade."

On the following day, Count Bezborodko invited me to call upon him, and expressed himself well pleased at the disposition shewn by his Sovereign. " She appears," he said, " to antici- " pate, with much satisfaction, the possibility " of forming such a union through your means. " She has so clearly manifested her desire to " bring this grand point to an early conclusion, " that it seems to me but proper you should give " some hints of it to the Vice-Chancellor. You " may rely upon his being enjoined the most " profound secrecy. The Emperor is no doubt " already apprised of the intentions of your ca- " binet?"

" I do not know," I replied; " it was but a " first idea; and it is very possible that, before " mentioning it to his ally, the King was desirous " of ascertaining the sentiments of the Empress."

Nevertheless, as I had lately been ordered to shew the utmost confidence to Count Cobentzel, I communicated to him, in strict secrecy, all that had taken place; and, although he had not received any instructions on the subject, I found him even more eager than I was myself for the success of so important a negociation.

I waited, at last, upon the Vice-Chancellor, Count Ostermann; he was not aware of any thing;

he was much surprised at the communication, and replied to me, in vague terms, "that he "would immediately give her Majesty an account "of our conversation;" he told me, a few days afterwards, with a still more apparent astonishment, "that the Empress, sensible of the desire "manifested by the King for an intimate connec- "tion, would give the necessary orders for fol- "lowing up the negociation, and felt a wish that "our government should send me full powers, to- "gether with the plan of a treaty."

I replied, "that it seemed to me much more "important, for the early success of this busi- "ness, that the Russian ministry would make "known to me the clauses which they were de- "sirous I should insert in the act; that I was, "however, on the point of communicating her "proposal to my court.

Accordingly I despatched a courier to Versailles, conceiving myself very fortunate in having succeeded, in so short a space of time, beyond the King's expectations, and, in having thereby dispelled the uneasiness of our ministry, with respect to an alliance which it did not seem to desire more warmly than Russia itself.

Every thing was calculated to make me suppose that a negociation, so happily commenced, and the success of which was equally desired by the chief contracting parties, would meet with few obstacles, and be accomplished before any rival power could guess of its object, and lay obstructions in the way.

To my great surprise, however, I learned that the Baron de Keller, minister of Prussia, and the English Chargé d'Affaires, had just been sending off a courier to their respective courts, at a moment when no urgent business appeared to call for so much hurry.

I was not long left in doubt; the old resident minister from Holland, who, under a prudent reserve, concealed sentiments truly republican, and therefore quite opposed to the political views of the Stadtholder, of England and of Prussia, called upon me with the utmost secrecy. "You contemplate," he said to me, "the formation of a "four-fold alliance, the success of which I have "much at heart, and which would, no doubt, "wonderfully disturb the triumph of those who "have just operated so sudden a revolution in "my country."

At first I treated as a fable the intelligence he had received. "It is all in vain," he replied; "the "secret has broke out; I know every thing; this "is the fact. The perfidy of one of Count Ostermann's clerks has betrayed you; Baron de "Keller has learned from him, in detail, the object you had in view. He communicated his "information to Fraser, the English Chargé "d'Affaires; they each hastened to forward it to "their governments; and I can even tell you "the contents of Fraser's dispatch; for it was "dictated to him by the Prussian minister, who, "being ignorant of my real sentiments, has shewn "it to me."

I quickly apprised the Empress of this misadventure. She was highly incensed at it; the clerk was dismissed and punished. But our secret was discovered and made public after the lapse of three weeks.

I felt at first but little uneasiness at it; I was in hopes that our ministry, compromised by such publicity, would deem itself too far engaged to recede. It will be seen what a wrong estimate I formed of those irresolute minds that were presiding over our destinies.

Fortune continued to favor the arms of Catherine the Second. She told me that the Turks had just experienced a fresh defeat in the Caucasus; but that she learned with as much grief as surprise, that amongst the heap of Mussulmans killed in the three actions anteriorly fought at Kilbourn, the bodies of three French engineers had been discovered.

"You know, Madam," I said, "that they had "been sent to Constantinople, at the time when an "attack was rather apprehended from the Russians, than an unforeseen aggression on the "part of the Ottomans. Dates are sufficient to "prove that they had not yet had time to receive "the counter-orders that were to be sent to them. "Your Majesty is aware that every position has "since been altered, and that we now sincerely "desire you every success, as the surest way "to a prompt restoration of peace."

Her reply was truly obliging: she pronounced it loud enough to be overheard by certain per-

sons who had availed themselves of the presence of our French officers amongst the Turks to indispose her against us. "I am persuaded, Count," she said, "of all the interest you feel for me; "you cannot wish any good to barbarians and "my enemies; I am even well convinced that in "the wishes you at present form for my success, "you follow the King's orders no less than your "own inclination."

The Princess then spoke to me of the surprise she felt at the resistance of our parliaments who refused to register the greater part of the edicts addressed to them by the King's ministers.

"I cannot explain to myself," she added, "how, in the midst of circumstances so critical "to the honor of France, a generous and en- "lightened nation can oppose, in this manner, the "intentions of a monarch who has only the pub- "lic welfare at heart, who has recently concluded "a war full of glory, by an honorable peace, and "who, even now, out of tenderness for his sub- "jects, offers to make such painful sacrifices to "their wishes, and to submit his court to such "courageous reforms."

I replied, "that this effervescence was the un- "avoidable effect of a combination of activity "and intellectual light spread over our country: "that frequently, when the people were too ra- "pidly enlightened, their judgment was dazzled, "and their passions were inflamed. But it is to be "hoped," I added, "that the King's wisdom "will be adequate, not only to calm that effer- "vescence, but even to triumph, by its means,

" over the intrigues of those who might hope to " derive advantage from our internal dissen- " sions."

" Believe me," rejoined the Empress, " a war " alone will change the direction of the public " mind, will bring it to a common center, give to " the passions a more salutary tendency, and re- " kindle true patriotism. That war, which is but " a necessary diversion, is still doubtful. I do " not, however, think it possible for you to avoid " it. The English and Prussians are driving you " to it, and I have received advices, which inform " me that the King of Sweden is visibly drawing " closer the ties already uniting him to those " powers."

I soon had personal proofs of the influence of the change effected in our ministry; I learned that, on the intelligence being received of the rupture between the Turks and the Russians, the Prince de Nassau had left Paris, and that, under the authority of the Archbishop of Toulouse, he had repaired to Prince Potemkin's army, and had opened some secret negociations with him.

I immediately wrote to him, and complained of that measure in strong terms. He was not long in coming to St. Petersburgh and bringing his answer in person. " I candidly acknowledge to " you my errors," he said to me; " I understand " nothing of intrigues, and you have opened my " eyes. I very simply thought I was rendering " you a service, in aiding, near Prince Potemkin, " the attempts you are instructed to make for the conclusion of an alliance with Russia. I ought

" to have perceived that the Archbishop of Tou-
" louse, having fallen out with your father, hoped
" to avail himself of me, for the purpose of sharing
" with, or wresting from you, the honor you would
" acquire by that negociation; but a word from
" you to your companion in arms was enough;
" I am here at your orders; I shall not stir a
" step, nor utter a single word without your
" sanction." I recognized him at this language, and cordially embraced him.

I then told him that the Empress would probably speak to him on the affairs of France, as to the state in which he had left them; and I pointed out what he ought to conceal and what to reply. From that moment he only gave me cause to applaud his frankness and scrupulous good faith.

Catherine, as I had foreseen, spoke to him of our plan of an alliance, and said: " that, notwith-
" standing her desire to conclude it, she could
" not go farther than she had done, until she had
" positive kuowledge of our intentions. Do you
" think," she observed, " that the French govern-
" ment will persist in the firmness of character
" of which it now gives some indication ?"

His answer was clear; for no man in the world was less capable of either suspecting or even understanding any thing like irresolution or timidity. He therefore assured the Empress that we were determined to support Holland our ally, who had been so unjustly attacked by Prussia

and by England; and he added these words, agreeably to the advice I had given him: "I "know what is particularly desired in France; "that your Majesty would consent to shut your "ports against the English."

"I do not say 'no' to any thing," replied the Empress; "but, before I can take any determi- "nation in this respect, it is necessary that my "naval forces, which are on the eve of setting "sail, should have arrived in the Mediterra- "nean."

I informed the King's council of all these details; and, without complaining of the secret mission confided to the Prince de Nassau, I took care to let the Archbishop of Toulouse know, that his little intrigue had failed of success.

About this time the Prince and Princess of Orange wrote to the Empress to inform her of the happy and prompt revolution which had reinstated them in their authority. I was told that the reply of Catherine the Second was cold and slightly ironical.

In every respect, therefore, the dispositions of that Sovereign were calculated to augment my hopes and my satisfaction. I was only anxious to receive from my court more positive and clearer orders. They arrived but too soon.

A courier brought me despatches which threw me into the greatest astonishment, and removed every shadow of reasonable hope. M. de Montmorin, instead of congratulating me for having

succeeded beyond his wishes and expectations, severely reproached me with having ventured too far, and with having proceeded too rapidly in the business.

And yet, instead of going beyond my instructions, I had confined myself to expressing the desire for a close union, agreeably to the literal orders I had received: and indeed it was no fault of mine, if that hint, opportunely thrown out, just when the English were openly attempting the boldest and most threatening measures, had been loudly welcomed by the Empress, and considered by her as a formal proposition for an alliance.

So far from taking upon myself to make any overtures, I had, on the contrary, waited for them. The Prince de Nassau, moreover, at a distance of six hundred leagues from me, had held to Prince Potemkin a language similar to mine. Could there be a necessity for more proofs to shew that I had not exceeded my instructions?

Every thing, however, was shortly explained: the crisis in our finances, the obstacles which the parliaments opposed to almost every measure brought forward by the ministry with the view of extricating itself from this difficulty, tended to damp the warlike intentions which appeared to have been entertained; for a moment, fear got the better of resentment, and we concluded with England a convention, the deplorable result of which was our desisting from all armaments. The negociation of the contemplated four-fold alliance was henceforward followed up very slowly

and through mere form; and this course tended materially to diminish our influence.

Count Woronzoff wrote from London to the ministers of the Empress, that England had deceived the Archbishop of Toulouse by leading this Prime Minister to expect, as the price of his abandoning Holland to its fate, that we should be left at liberty to assist the Porte against Russia, or in other words, that after having destroyed our influence at Vienna, the Hague, Berlin and St. Petersburgh, England would allow us to make useless efforts in support of the Turks, whom it was impossible to defend.

I was thrown into consternation by such an act of weakness and by the triumph of our rivals; all my illusions were dispelled, and, from this moment, I had present to my mind the abyss into which my country and my King would be drawn by councils devoid of energy, and by passions without restraint.

Compelled to dissemble these painful sentiments and gloomy forebodings, I affected, in my diplomatic character, a tranquillity to which I was wholly a stranger. Having been invited one day to a representation at the Hermitage, I endeavored, in the presence of the court circle, to disguise any expression in my countenance, which might augment the unrestrained satisfaction displayed by the Prussian, Dutch, Portuguese and even Swedish ministers, as well as by their partisans; but giving way to my meditations as soon as the representation began, my

mind became gradually absorbed in the most disheartening reflexions.

Whilst I was thus engaged, I suddenly heard a voice quite close to my ear; it proceeded from, the Empress who bending herself towards me said in a low tone: " Why do you allow yourself to be " afflicted? what is the use of these gloomy ideas? " what are you doing? recollect that, in all this, " you have nothing wherewith to reproach yourself." This amiable, penetrating and intelligent Princess had thus been reading my inmost thoughts.

However, as her mind was as distinguished for elevation as her character for firmness, she persisted for a long time in believing that the weakness of our government was not an evil without a remedy.

The language of the Emperor's ambassador confirmed her in that opinion: he had received instructions from his court to prevent, as far as laid in his power, any accommodation between England and Russia, and to hasten the progress of the negociations relating to the four-fold alliance. It was natural to suppose that Joseph II only acted in this manner with an intimate knowledge of the intentions of his sister and of the King of France, his brother-in-law and ally.

As the internal troubles, which were convulsing our country, exercised so much influence at this period over the politics of Europe, it will not be irrelevant to look back with a rapid glance, and recall, in a few words, the origin, the cause, and the progress of those troubles.

The disorder introduced in our finances by the weakness of Louis XV, by the luxury of his court, the caprices of his mistresses, the seven years' war undertaken without just grounds, carried on without talents, and concluded without advantage, had been continued under the reign of Louis XVI.

This Prince was assuredly not deficient in the virtues requisite for substituting order in the place of confusion; it was difficult to expect from a King, intentions more pure, inclinations more correct, or more virtuous sentiments than were exhibited by him; but he was young, and the abuses were of long standing.

There is often greater difficulty in reforming a court, than a whole nation. The wishes of the latter are only heard at a great distance; the resistance of the former is always present to the Prince; and the complaints of those who feed upon abuses, strike with much more force upon the ears of the monarch, than the sighs of those who groan, in the provinces, under the weight of taxation.

Accordingly, the efforts of the King, who was at first advised by Turgot and Malesherbes, and afterwards by M. Necker, had no other effect than to palliate the evil, instead of removing it. No sooner was it attempted, by salutary reforms, to destroy it by the roots, than the court resounded with complaints; the King's goodness was alarmed; M. Necker was dismissed.

On the other hand, a youthful population tired of peace, thirsting after changes and battles, and impatient to revenge the national honor from the insults it had suffered in 1763, succeeded in forcing the ministers into war. Louis found himself drawn into it, notwithstanding his love of peace. America became free, England was humbled, but France paid nearly a thousand millions for that glory.

In this manner the abyss of the finances grew wider; but the laurels which threw their shade over it hardly permitted our pride to measure its depth. The decline however was rapid; the state was plunging itself into the chasm. It required nothing short of the strength of a prudent and vigorous mind to arrest its fall; a man of a keen and frivolous wit offered himself; M. de Calonne was entrusted with the direction of public affairs.

This minister, full of self confidence and boldness, whilst deceiving himself, deceived for a moment the public opinion: the promises of reform dispelled every fear; the loans were filled up; brilliant hopes were mistaken for realities; the profuse lavish of money was continued; the court was satisfied; at last the assembling of the notables made the people believe that relief was at hand, that their wishes would be heard, and that the frightful disproportion between their means and the charges levied upon them, between our income and our expenditure, would shortly disappear.

I have already said, that the convocation of this national assembly had created a similar illusion all over Europe. It was every where imagined that the generosity of a Prince, who presented himself, at his first setting out, as a competitor of Henry IV, seconded as it was by a ministry who called to their aid the knowledge of the most enlightened men in France, would witness the complete success of his benevolent intentions.

This expectation was not borne out by the event; the remarkable changes that had been wrought upon our minds, our opinions, and our manners had escaped observation. France was no longer the same: an effeminate reign; disgraceful reverses of fortune; an unsteady administration, which was bold and arbitrary at one time, weak and timid at another; the spread given alike to truths and errors by a new philosophy; the enthusiasm for a liberty we had long envied England, and had just established in America; the discontent of a people overburdened with taxes; the popularity acquired by the parliaments, wherever they resisted the ministry; their banishments; their recalls; lastly, an almost general longing for innovations and reforms; these were the causes which, in the midst of a nearly absolute monarchy, created a kind of republican fermentation.

The King was loved and respected; the court, on the contrary, was hated. Disunion existed in the court itself; some of the high personages of

which it was composed, were seduced by the infatuation created by M. de Calonne, and warmly supported his plans; others, in greater number, supported the parliament either from principle, through a spirit of opposition, or a desire to upset the ministers and step into their places.

M. de Calonne, always presumptuous and imprudent, introduced into the ranks of the notables, the very persons whose opinions and rivalry he had most cause to dread; but what was chiefly calculated to debar him of all chance of success, was the little confidence inspired by his personal character, and the old resentments of the judicial bodies against him.

It is possible that some of his plans might have been carried, had they been projected and presented by any other minister; and I believe, that in such a case, the violent convulsions, which afterwards shook the state to its very foundations, might have been avoided or considerably delayed; but fate would have it otherwise.

On the 22nd of February, 1787, the King opened the assembly of notables. Instead of the enthusiasm, which an appeal of this nature to the national wishes ought then to have excited, a spirit of mistrust, of criticism, of opposition, of censure, and even of raillery, was every where openly manifested.

Liberty was carried to the extreme of licentiousness; epigrams, pamphlets, manifestoes, were showered upon the ministers and the notables. Their meetings, in allusion to certain theatrical

productions, were called *false confidences* and *forced consent*. One of these deplorable jokes, so unbecoming the gravity of existing circumstances, presented nevertheless an idea replete with good sense. The author personified œconomy, and ushered it in the presence of the notables, who gaily exclaimed: " Surely, if economy is admit-
" ted, we have nothing more to do here."

This was a powerful truth, though uttered in joke; for, if a firm government had armed itself with all the power necessary for suppressing all useless expences, how many misfortunes would have been spared to us! We might, probably, have escaped a revolution; whereas, it must be acknowledged, that however fortunate may be its results, a revolution is at first a general overthrow of all established order; it can never produce an amelioration in the fate of future generations, but by the sacrifice of the existing one.

On the opening of the assembly, M. de Calonne pronounced a speech, in which were displayed his quick mind and unmoved self-confidence. But his winning eloquence was unable to withdraw the minds of others from the grave reflections occasioned by the picture of the deplorable condition of our finances, which he was compelled to present in its true colors.

The annual deficit, notwithstanding the difference between the calculations of M. Necker and M. de Calonne, was still enormous; some persons computed it at fifty six, others at eighty, others again at one hundred and forty millions.

The ministers declared, that the œcónomies effected were inadequate to meet it, the increase of taxation impracticable, and the loans a mere temporary ressource, and more injurious than the very evil which had called for them.

"The only remedy," he said, "under such "circumstances, is in the reform of abuses." Accordingly, he applied for the suppression of the poll-tax, the removal of the custom-houses to a greater distance, the lightening of the duty on salt, the alienation of a portion of the royal domains, the doing away of the twentieths, to be replaced by a territorial tax, the abrogation of the privileges of the nobility and clergy, with respect to the payment of taxes, and lastly, the establishment of provincial assemblies, with the view of rendering the contributions less arbitrary and oppressive, and more equally distributed.

A hint was likewise thrown out, of re-establishing in their condition, as citizens, the protestants, whose proscription had deprived us of so many branches of industry, and enriched so many foreign countries at our expence.

Already, in 1752, this act of justice had been solicited for them, though ineffectually, by Marshal de Richelieu. M. de Malesherbes had lately published an elegant pamphlet in their favor, and, in 1778 and 1787, the parliament had warmly espoused their cause.

All these proposals, clearly presented in M. de Calonne's speech, and in his various writings

were just and prudent, and appeared calculated to raise, to the highest degree of enthusiasm, the affection of the people for the Sovereign who had adopted them. If some of these proposals had not been sufficiently matured, an assembly so enlightened as the notables, could easily modify and amend them.

Had not, in short, that Prince just grounds for calculating upon some proofs of zeal and of confidence, whose minister had, with his sanction, publicly uttered these words: "Hitherto the maxim of the government had been: *As wills the King, so wills the law;*" at present, the maxim of Louis XVI is: *As wills the happiness of the people, so wills the King?*

But, instead of endeavoring to give perfection to the minister's work, this object was lost in the desire of upsetting it. No one foresaw a revolution; many, through party spirit or personal motives, dreaded the reform of abuses; some desired more extensive and bolder innovations; all mistrusted the levity of the Comptroller-General, and imagined that the ressources which might be placed at his disposal, would only serve to increase the prodigality of the court.

Already the parliaments of Dijon and Besançon addressed warm remonstrances to the King, and declared, that some new contributions which had been imposed, were illegal, although they had been created in substitution of feudal labor.

Strong opposition had been raised against the

attempt to shake the credit of the discount-office, as also against the indecent traffic of which the waters of Paris and the bank of St. Charles were the objects.

Such being the disposition of the public mind, how could any satisfactory result be expected, since the government, when soliciting support, had nothing but obstacles to encounter? There was need of a common effort to relieve the depression of our finances; that this effort would have been excited, was naturally anticipated; and yet, nothing else was found but a disunion of sentiments, which was calculated to paralyse every measure.

A numerous and powerful opposition sprung up at the very first sittings of the notables. The Archbishop of Narbonne loudly defended the privileges of the clergy; the Archbishop of Toulouse insisted upon the correctness of M. Necker's calculation, and contrasted them with those of M. de Calonne.

Several members endeavored to prove, that the provincial assemblies would be dangerous or unnecessary, that the territorial tax would be impracticable, if levied in kind; and if it were levied in money, that it would be more proper to enquire first the extent of it, and its probable result, and ascertain, with greater accuracy, the real wants and resources of the state.

But the bitterness and irritation of the public mind was manifested in a still clearer manner by

the violent reproaches which were directed by the Archbishop of Narbonne, in the name of the clergy, and by many committees of the assembly, against the Comptroller General, with respect to a passage in one of his speeches, wherein the minister, always inclined to believe in the truth of what he desired, had ventured to assert that the notables agreed in the main with him, on almost every part of his plans and proposals.

The Princes de Conti and de Beauvau, as well as the most influential personages, joined in the reproaches made by the Archbishop. The sittings grew stormy; nothing went on; the discontent of the people was again springing up; the clergy became indignant; the parliaments felt irritated; licentious pamphlets said, without sparing the very monarch, "The King is asleep; "the Comptroller General is in convulsions; the "nobility in a state of apathy; the clergy in a "continued fever; the people in the last agonies."

The repeated explanations given by M. de Calonne, were met with the most ironical replies, and the most contradictory proposals. The Bishops demanded the assembling of the clergy. M. de la Fayette had the boldness to follow the example given by M. de Malesherbes a few years before, and asked for the convocation of the States-General; his proposal had no other effect than to create great surprise. No one dreamed that this bold wish would so soon be realized.

Publicity was given to a very bitter correspon-

dence between M. Necker and M. de Calonne; and their mutual accusations increased the fermentation of the public mind.

The Comptroller-General had thus to sustain a painful conflict of two months duration; the King, at last, perpetually assailed with complaints from every quarter, and being lately deprived, by the death of M. de Vergennes, of a wise and firm councillor, yielded, though reluctantly, to the public voice.

On the 8th of April 1787, M. de Calonne, and Miromenil the Keeper of the Seals, were dismissed; the finances were entrusted to M. de Forqueux, and the seals to M. de Lamoignon. M. de Calonne, though regretted by the King, was banished to Lorraine, and M. Necker, to a distance of twenty leagues from Paris.

The new Minister of Finances was too weak to keep the helm in such stormy times; he was soon replaced by M. de Villedeuil, who had no greater success; at last, the credit of the Queen procured for the Archbishop of Sens, the post of President of the Council of Finances, a title created in order to spare the feelings of the other ministers.

The assembly of notables separated on the 28th of May. By its constant opposition, the government was left in a much more difficult situation than when it had determined upon convoking it. The suppression of feudal labor, a new stamp duty, and the creation of provincial assemblies were the only part of the plans of the administration which the notables had adopted.

On the occasion of its last sitting, M. de Lamoignon vainly attempted to restore public confidence, by a faithful exposition of the King's sentiments. "Before the reign of this Prince," he said, "one might justly charge the royal "power with great encroachments, such as the "abolition of the States-General, and of the as- "sembly of notables. How great is now the "difference? the King's love for his people, raises "him above all vain pride; it is the monarch "himself, who comes to meet his people, and who "desires to assemble and consult the provincial "assemblies, in order to ascertain the national "wish, and to fulfil, by their aid, all his engage- "ments, and reform all abuses."

These expressions were in vain! the spirit of resistance had become too general; the clergy constantly refused to alienate a portion of its property in order to liquidate its own debts; the stamp duty, when presented to the parliament, was received with the strongest opposition, and occasioned the warmest remonstrances.

This body asked for the same communications that had been made to the notables. "If it be "true, said those magistrates, that the people "ought to be satisfied of the justice of a law the "moment it is registered, it is no less true, that "the parliament should first entertain this con- "viction, which is not only to follow, but first of "all, to determine the act of verification."

The King insisted that the registering should take place; the parliament persisted in its refusal.

Suddenly, on the 25th of July, it was surrounded with troops. His Majesty's brothers repaired to the assembly, and signified to the magistrates the express will of the monarch.

The parliament decreed fresh remonstrances, which were drawn up by M. Ferrand, afterwards a Peer of France, and printed. These remonstrances produced a deep impression on the public mind. They represented, in strong colors, the consternation in which the people was plunged, the gradual and intolerable increase of the public burdens, the augmentation of which had not been less than one hundred and thirty millions, since the conclusion of the war.

"All access to truth," they said, "is shut out, "to prevent its reaching the King. The choice "of his ministers had been disavowed by public "opinion. The King was requested to arm him- "self against his own goodness. If the cour- "tiers, they added, did not disguise from him the "condition of the state, he would not have per- "mitted so many acquisitions, so many gifts and "ruinous exchanges to be made. The new tax "decreed in opposition to good faith, would en- "danger the public tranquillity. In short, the "monarch was requested to convoke the States- "General."

Louis XVI was irritated, and ordered the registering to take place without delay; upon the refusal of the parliament, his Majesty banished it to Troyes. The Court of Aids then declared

that all forced registering was null and void; it repeated, at the same time, these words of Henry IV: "All irregular steps adopted by a government, "are acts of violence; they are manifestations of "power but not of right."

The public at Paris, loudly espoused the cause of the banished magistrates. The lieutenant of police ordered that the club, called the *saloon club* should be closed; this was an arbitrary and a useless command; the club was then composed of persons of distinction, among the nobility, and the higher ranks of citizens, as well as of those artists and literary men who enjoyed most consideration.

That reunion presented, for the first time, the image of an equality which became, soon afterwards, even in preference to liberty itself, the object most ardently desired by the greater part of the nation. The discontent which was, therefore, occasioned by the closing of the club, was carried so far, that the public authority deemed it prudent to re-open it.

Whilst the government was manifesting such apprehension of private reunions, the provincial assemblies gave still greater umbrage to the higher bodies of the magistracy. The parliament of Bordeaux forbade those assemblies from holding their sittings; that of Brittany demanded the recall of the parliament of Paris. The parliament of Besançon, more violent than the rest, petitioned of the King not to send to it any more edicts relating

to fresh impositions; it declared itself incompetent to sanction them, and urged the convocation of the States-General.

It was at this time that the King appointed the Archbishop of Toulouse prime minister. The Marshals of Segur and Castries tendered their resignation; but the Keeper of the Seals, the Baron de Breteuil and M. de Montmorin, retained their portfolios; M. de Brienne was named minister of war, and M. de La Luzerne minister of marine.

The banishment of the parliament of Bordeaux to Libourne afforded fresh food to the public discontent: all the supreme courts loudly declared in favor of the exiled magistrates; the clamor became general from one extremity of France to the other.

The prime minister must have felt, by this time, that it was much easier to shine in an opposition party, than to retain the lead of a government in the midst of so many storms. I am even persuaded that, if he had been gifted with the genius which was wanting to him, he would, with great difficulty, have extricated himself from such a crisis.

Every thing, in fact, appeared to be disorganized; the King, who was good, but timid, and harassed by contradictory advices, remained irresolute in the midst of them; he entertained but one sentiment, a desire for the public welfare; but, in his attempts to effect it, every private interest presented it to him under different aspects.

He was not possessed of the strength of mind requisite for persisting in a determination, for following up a system, or for supporting a minister.

The court clamorously defended the abuses. The nobility, formerly the rivals of the throne, had, now, no other wish than to retain their pecuniary and honorary privileges, to rise rapidly to the stations which promised glory to them, and to obtain the pensions or sinecures which were necessary for upholding their rank and splendor.

The clergy, resting the maintenance of its power on its being in accordance with the public authority, would have shewn itself ready to second it, had not that authority been driven to require indispensible pecuniary sacrifices at its hands. And lastly, the parliaments, whose assistance had strengthened the throne and enabled it to destroy the seignorial power, claimed the right of succeeding to the States-General, and of protecting the interests of the people against the ministerial authority. It was, therefore, with a view to maintain their independence, and to oppose the only obstacle which existed against the will of a monarch grown absolute, that they shewed themselves obstinate in opposing an augmentation of public burdens.

This concurrence of circumstances appeared to unite, for a moment, against the court, those different wills and interests which were opposed to each other.

The government could neither discharge its debts nor even its annual expences: it called for

sacrifices; they were refused by the nobility and clergy; it proposed loans; M. de Calonne's prodigality had absorbed the credit established by M. Necker; provincial assemblies were created, to revive public confidence; the great bodies of the magistracy considered such establishments as dangerous to their authority; taxes, at last, were imposed; the parliaments resisted them, in order to acquire greater popularity. Where was the statesman who could triumph over so many obstacles?

We have already seen that only one course presented itself, at this time, to the prime minister, in order to rekindle French honor, and turn into another direction the passions, which were agitating and leading astray the public mind; that course was war; a just war, provoked by recent insults; a war, in which three allied powers were disposed to support us; a war, equally indispensible for upholding our influence, our consideration, our commercial interests and our internal repose.

This course was, however, the only one which the Archbishop did not dare to venture upon. It naturally presented itself; it was even called for at his hands; but his weakness was frightened at it. Timid against our natural enemies, daring against the nation, he feared to risk our arms against rival powers, and hazarded public attacks against the people and the parliaments, which, immediately provoking the convocation of the

States-General, by a kind of appeal to the nation, sounded the hour of the revolution.

This revolution, however, so called by the many errors committed, did not break out until two years afterwards, and was only announced in 1787, and in the following year, by those acts of hostility which are always the forerunners of general engagements.

Towards the close of 1787, the King withdrew several of his edicts. The parliament of Paris, having offered to make some concessions, obtained its recall; this act, of a transitory submission, weakened its popularity, without satisfying the public authority. M. d'Espremenil, a councillor of that court, and, at this time, a very ardent man, said, "that the parliament had gone away "covered with glory, and was returning covered "with mud."

The hatred against M. de Calonne survived his disgrace. M. Duport, who has acquired celebrity in the constituent assembly, by his reasoning powers, after having, within the parliament, attributed all our evils to, what he called, the *visirate* of our ministers, declared that M. de Calonne was accused by the public voice, and by the unanimous cry of all France. The parliament caused an information to be laid against the ex-minister; but the King opposed it.

At last, the Prince determined to have two edicts registered in his presence, the one for the recall of the protestants, the other for a loan of

forty millions. The parliament protested against the forms of that sitting.

The Duke of Orleans rose, and declared to the King that the deliberation was illegal; he was banished to Villers-Coterets. Two councillors, who made violent speeches against this forced registering, Messieurs Freteau and Sabbatier, were arrested and carried to state prisons.

At this period, the peers of France warmly complained, in a written statement, of the prohibition which forbade them to attend the sittings of the parliament.

Such was the deplorable situation of the Kingdom, when I received, in Russia, the ministerial reproaches, for having too much accelerated the four-fold alliance, which might have restored some strength to our government, some dignity without, and tranquillity within, by turning towards war the minds of an ardent youth, who fought against the abuses of power, and against power itself, merely for want of other occupations and other enemies.

All France felt the workings of a secret fermentation: a contest of some sort was absolutely necessary to minds desirous of honor and renown; intelligent ministers would have eagerly seized the opportunity for changing the object of contest.

Our troubles, however, had not yet had the effect of weakening, in Europe, and particularly in Russia, the recollection of our successes, and the idea of our power. The Sovereigns alone began to entertain slight alarms; but the people

saw, with the satisfaction of hope, that there existed a country in which it was seriously intended to lighten the burdens that oppressed them.

The nobility, recalling to mind its ancient existence, which the governments had destroyed, beheld, with some pleasure, the attacks directed against the arbitrary and the ministerial power; and, foreseeing, as yet, no danger to itself in the contemplated innovations, rather favored them, underhand, than opposed them.

The clergy alone dreaded that philosophical spirit, its natural enemy; but it felt secured in the deep root it had taken, and did not apprehend that any effort could shake its foundation.

Catherine the Second, judging of others by herself, attributed the goodness of Louis XVI to elevation of mind; she hoped that this Prince, combining some firmness with his virtues, would triumph over the obstacles which his love for his people, and his benevolent intentions, had to encounter, on the one hand, from the passions of courtiers, who were adverse to the reform of abuses, and, on the other, from the parliaments, as well as from the immoderate ardor of innovators, who, instead of repairing, ran the risk of destroying every thing.

This Princess, in short, though surprised at the political weakness of our cabinet, considered it as the effect of a transient embarrassment and she could not believe in its duration. It was under this impression that she still urged, with the ut-

most anxiety, the conclusion of an alliance with the Emperor, the King of Spain, and ourselves.

Such were her dispositions, though our ministry had formerly despaired of impressing them again upon her; and yet, after we had succeeded, they became, to the prime minister who, unfortunately, presided over our destinies, rather an occasion of uneasiness than of satisfaction.

Having been, at first, induced to propose the four-fold alliance, out of fear of the English, it was unbecoming, and almost ridiculous in him, to decline it. On the other hand, this fear of the English prevented him from concluding a treaty which would, probably, be followed by a war, as might be foreseen from the threats artfully thrown out, on this subject, by the British cabinet; and M. de Brienne, like all weak men, unable to conclude, or to break off, resorted to the worse course, that of evasion, and of gaining time.

M. de Montmorin would have acted with more openness had he been at liberty to do so; but compelled to pursue a dilatory system, which was not his own, he wrote to me that, previously to resolving upon coming to a conclusion, it was important to discover what were the real intentions of Catherine, with respect to the Turks, and what were the limits which her prudence would fix to her ambition.

It was not only difficult, but impossible, for me to satisfy him upon this point. The Empress had not yet any settled views on the subject. As indemnities must depend upon good fortune or

reverses, it is not, at the commencement of a war, that one can ascertain what may be the conditions of peace.

It will, besides, appear extraordinary, however true it is, that there did not yet exist any determined plan of campaign. The Empress had urged Prince Potemkin to communicate his own to her; he always promised one, but never sent it.

He had been seen, in time of peace, ruminating in his mind the most extensive plans of conquests; and yet the war appeared to have taken him by surprise. At the moment when that war was declared, he had, for a fortnight, shewn himself reserved, undecided, dispirited, not knowing where to find provisions, or what orders to give to the different corps of his army.

When at last he grew more composed, and the preparations were completed, it was impossible to obtain from him any exact information that would allow of a plan of campaign being concerted between the two imperial courts. It was merely agreed upon, that the Russians should lay siege to Oczakoff, and the Austrians to Belgrade.

The Turks were accordingly at leisure to collect their forces, and assume the offensive. The conquest of the Crimea was their principal object; they undertook it, and began by landing eight thousand choice troops to the north-west of the peninsula, with the intention of taking possession of Kilbourn.

General Souwaroff commanded the Russians. The battle was obstinate and sanguinary; twice the Mussulmans made their enemies fall back and give way. Souwaroff issuing orders as the chief, and setting the example as a common soldier, rallied his troops. Though wounded, he continued to fight, decided the victory, routed the Turks, and was a second time wounded in the pursuit. He killed four thousand men, lost only a few, and made a great number of prisoners.

The Empress celebrated this success by a public *Te Deum.*

This Princess learned, with regret, that it was attempted to transfer to Paris the negociation of the four-fold alliance. Count Cobentzel, by the Emperors orders, constantly urged the progress of it.

I was falling into a false position; the Russian ministers, surprised at the reserve and the language which were enjoined to me, reproached me individually for the dilatory means I was compelled to adopt; as I always insisted upon the necessity of ascertaining, before hand, what indemnities would be required by the imperial courts, as conditions of the peace.

I could only obtain this vague answer: "The "events must determine these indemnities; we "cannot know them before hand. You may, "however, assure the King, that it is not our "intention to destroy the Ottoman empire, but "merely to obtain, through a suitable satisfaction, "an honorable and a solid peace."

Whilst our delay inspired the Russian cabinet with some distrust, the Prussians augmented that distrust by spreading the report of a pretended reunion between France and Prussia. The English, moreover, informed the Empress of the assistance given to the Turks by several French officers, who constantly superintended the works in the arsenal of Constantinople.

Prince Potemkin wrote to reproach me, in warm terms, with that assistance, as being so much at variance with our friendly demonstrations.

England, emboldened by our irresolutions, addressed to the Russian minister some complaints drawn up in rather unbecoming language, respecting the projected alliance between France and Russia.

Catherine replied in a dignified manner, and expressed herself justly astonished at such alarms. She said that she was at liberty to form such alliances as she deemed necessary, and added: "I do not interfere with the ties contracted by "the cabinet of London with Prussia and with "Holland; I shall, however, regulate my conduct "upon that of others towards me."

When I communicated these news to M. de Montmorin, I dwelt upon the necessity of abandoning that character of wavering which cooled the ardor of our friends, and emboldened our enemies. I particularly requested satisfactory answers with regard to the assistance which we were reproached with affording the Mussulmans.

It was proper, in fact, to take a timely advan-

tage of the overtures made to us. Hitherto the Empress appeared moderate in her views; but unless she were held back by an advantageous connection with us, a splendid success might soon rekindle her ambition, and make her extend her plans to the conquest of Constantinople.

Under such circumstances, I congratulated myself upon Mr. Fitz-Herbert's absence; his talents would have caused me much more embarrassment than the extraordinary candor of M. Fraser, the Chargé d'Affaires of England.

The latter, questioned by the Russian ministers, on the motives that induced his cabinet to display so much enmity, and to foment in Turkey as well as in Sweden, a spirit of hatred and hostility against Russia, candidly replied: "What would "you have? we are ordered to do, in all points, "the very reverse of what France may desire; "she was anxious for a peace between you and "the Porte; we spur the Turks on to war; had "France encouraged war, we should have recommended peace."

The Empress was much amused at a language so foreign to diplomacy; and yet the honest Englishman had committed no other error than that of plainly telling the truth.

Notwithstanding this frankness, England and Prussia offered their mediation to Russia, in order to accelerate the peace. Catherine received, with indifference, an offer of which she doubted the sincerity.

I had in vain fulfilled a painful duty, in sup-

porting, by every argument in my power, the proposal made by my court, to transfer to Paris, the negociation for an alliance; but, although I was seconded by Count de Cobentzel, Catherine sent orders to M. de Simolin, to represent to our ministry, all the inconvenience and delays that would result from the change.

The departure of the Russian courier was retarded, for some time, by the disunion which had just arisen in the ministry. Messieurs de Marcoff and d'Ostermann had fallen out; and the misunderstanding was followed by very warm scenes between them. Delay was, besides, a habitual complaint in the Russian cabinet; Count Cobentzel had waited six weeks, for the documents necessary for dispatching a courier to the Emperor; and, at the period of the partition of Poland, under the administration of Count Panin, the Russian Ambassador at Warsaw had written seventeen despatches of a pressing nature, without receiving any answer.

The affairs of the North, instead of clearing up, continued to grow more perplexed; the Empress secretly informed of the intentions of the King of Prussia, who wished to add Dantzig to his other possessions, loudly declared that she would protect that city.

It was the opinion of some people, that Catherine's moderation was but temporary; her ambition appeared by starts to revive; and when the despatches of her generals presaged to her any brilliant success, she would project the formation

of establishments in the Morea, and the Archipelago.

However, the courier she had ordered to be sent to France, took his departure. I was made acquainted with the purport of the despatches which he carried; the reply of the Empress to the King was friendly and of a confiding nature; she expressed the desire of forming an alliance with us; and, though she could not yet foresee the events that might guide her in laying down the indemnities which the justice of her case might entitle her to claim, she called for overtures on our part, and announced besides,in sufficiently clear terms, that she would merely ask of us to remain neutral between her and the Turks, as she would also be between us and the English, if a maritime war should break out.

In this manner every thing I had foreseen was about to be verified, and fully justified me by proving, that I had strictly kept myself within the limits of my instructions.

My hopes were revived; the conferences were renewed with more frequency. Russia wanted to bring Denmark into our alliance; but our old connection with Sweden rendered the accession of that power a matter of some difficulty.

At this time the secretary of legation, who had replaced near me M. Charrette de la Coliniere, being compelled to return home, the Queen obtained that a young man, whom she honored with her protection, should be sent in his stead; this was M. Genet, the brother of Madame Campan.

I found him full of wit, well informed, conversant in many languages, and gifted with agreeable talents; but he was of a very ardent mind. He was afterwards carried away by the revolutionary frenzy and was named by the Girondines as minister of the republic at the United States; there, his fiery activity failed in an attempt which he made to undermine the credit of the illustrious Washington, and to render the American government still more democratical in its forms.

The indolence of Prince Potemkin greatly annoyed the Empress; and, whilst he undertook nothing, he accused the Austrians of inactivity. His only desire, his only aim was the capture of Oczakoff; and, from an apprehension of failing, he made as extensive preparations against that weak town, as if he had to lay siege to Luxembourg.

The engineer officer Lafitte had, however, written to me that it was not in a condition to resist a sudden attack; but the time thrown away by the Prince was made available by the Turks, who reinforced the garrison, hastened the progress of the works, and completed the defence of the town.

Had the Mussulmans been less ignorant in military tactics and discipline, they would have derived great advantages from the hesitations of their enemy; but I was aware of their blind fanaticism, and of their obstinacy in making war without any scientific rules; and so early as the 14th of March 1788, I announced to the French

minister, that Oczakoff, Belgrade and Choczim would be taken; and that the imperial armies, proceeding uninterruptedly from one success to another, would compel the Porte to submit to the conditions which those two powers might think proper to dictate to it.

Potemkin, however, immoveable at Fort Elizabeth, worn with anxiety, and tormented by chimerical fears, incessantly annoyed Catherine with his complaints, without pointing out the evils to which he adverted, or the remedies he wished to be applied to them.

Romanzoff, on the contrary, perfectly calm in the Ukraine, but active in forming his plans, and in carrying them into execution, marched his troops into Poland with order and rapidity; he shewed himself quite at ease respecting the issue of events, felt certain of success, and never omitted to send to the Empress, every week, the most complete and satisfactory reports.

Catherine did not fail to be struck at this contrast in the character and conduct of the two generals; but it created no alteration in her sentiments; and the same difference was always remarked in the attention she paid to these rivals; the one claimed her gratitude and esteem, the other retained her affection.

Potemkin was, as it were, the creature of this Princess; she had foretold he would be a great man, clung, out of self love, to her prediction, and would, right or wrong, effect its accomplishment.

The following fact will bear evidence of Prince Potemkin's inactivity: the Prince de Ligne had begun a letter to me from Fort Elizabeth in the course of December 1787, which he only concluded on the 15th February 1788. "Nothing new," he wrote, "since the commencement of my letter "which I am at last sending to you; for it does "not appear to me that the Tartars, so con- "stantly announced, will ever arrive. But, on "the other hand, we have had from Paris a "Prince de Nassau, who has *untartarised* you, by "inducing your M. de Montmorin to remove M. "de Lafitte and to change the protecting system "adopted by France in favor of the Turks.

"His obstinacy in negociations, as well as in the "heat of battle, will always avail him; his repu- "tation, and the logic he has acquired, without "ever finding time to study it, have well second- "ed your wishes in this important juncture.

"Did I not witness his saving my life, sword "in hand, the day before yesterday? he is never, "two days running, like any other man; this is "the fact: I was recovering from an attack of "fever; for it is our good fortune in this place to "be without medical men. I was told that the "sun was out; I depended upon this for my re- "covery. Nassau guides my steps out of this "wretched fortress, which is no bigger than my "hand; my men carry me in their arms, and "lay me down upon the grass. I fall asleep, "when the first rays of the sun begin to shine. "A large and horrid serpent, who was reviving

" like myself under their genial influence, at-
" tempts to deprive me of life, or at least to en-
" tangle me in its rings. I hear a noise: it pro-
" ceeded from Prince de Nassau who was strik-
" ing at the serpent with all his might, and cut-
" ting him into twenty pieces, which, though se-
" parated from each other, were still in motion.

" To-day, some Turkish prisoners have been
" brought in; they are as tiresome as those at the
" ball of the Opera. I could hardly persuade
" myself that they were not masked figures, or
" that we really were at war with them."

However severe must be the opinion entertained of Prince Potemkin, it must, nevertheless, be admitted, that this extraordinary man combined many noble and rare qualities with his capricious character. The Prince de Ligne gave a very correct description of him, when he wrote to me from the camp of Oczakoff: " I see here
" the commander of an army, who appears indo-
" lent, and is constantly at work; who has no
" other desk than his knees, no comb but his
" fingers; who is always lying down, though never
" sleeping, either by night or by day, because his
" zeal for his sovereign, whom he fairly adores,
" keeps him always restless, and because a can-
" non shot which does not reach him, makes him
" uneasy by the recollection that it deprives one
" of his soldiers of life. Fearful for others; brave
" for himself; stopping under the heavy fire of a
" battery, to issue quietly his orders; and yet

" rather resembling Ulysses than Achilles; dis-
" turbed at the approach of every danger; gay
" when in the heat of it; pensive in the midst of
" pleasures; unhappy through excess of happi-
" ness; indifferent about every thing; easily dis-
" gusted; morose; inconstant; at one time a grave
" philosopher and an intelligent minister, at ano-
" ther, like a child of ten years; he is not vindic-
" tive; will ask pardon for any uneasiness he
" may have occasioned, and will immediately re-
" pair an act of injustice; he fancies that he loves
" God; and he fears the devil, whom he believes
" to be still more powerful and corpulent than a
" Prince Potemkin; with one hand he makes
" signs to the women who take his fancy, and cros-
" ses himself with the other." Here I stop; for this truly original portrait was extended too far in Prince de Ligne's, letter, for he seldom knew when to break off, when his lively imagination carried him away.

There was, at this time, more activity in diplomacy than in the armies: the Porte itself, emerging from its usual apathy, had found means, by the secret interference of Prussia, to determine the King of Sweden to arm his ships, in order to prevent those of Catherine from sailing to any great distance, or once more carrying the Russian flag to the Archipelago.

Frederick William had succeeded in forming himself a party within the city of Dantzig. Some corps of Prussian troops were approaching it; and

the agents of this Prince, rekindling in Poland the love of liberty, presented to the ardent minds of that too much oppressed country, the hope of shaking off the yoke of Russia.

All these flashes of lightning, the forerunners of storms, gave anxiety to Catherine, without shaking her firmness; and the news she received of the signing of a treaty of alliance between England, Holland and Prussia, made her more ardently desire the conclusion of a four-fold alliance, the necessity of which was daily becoming more manifest.

In vain, however, she asked us for a clear explanation of our intentions; in vain she endeavored to penetrate the secrets of our political system; unfortunately we had none, and it was impossible to guess at the plans of a cabinet rendered irresolute by its own weakness and timidity.

Nevertheless I was always instructed to continue the negociation; but a singular circumstance occurred which, for a moment, increased its difficulties. Spain had then, at St. Petersburgh, a well informed, upright, and intelligent minister; the excessive severity of the climate unfortunately affected his health; he was seized with a complaint which medical men call *hypocondriacal melancholy*.

This malady, so singular in its nature, disturbed his reason on one point only; it was not affected in any other respect. His despatches, which he communicated to me, were always remarkable for the good sense displayed in them, and the ele-

gance of their style; and, for a considerable time, nothing was discovered in his familiar conversation that could betray his infirmity; he was always the same in public conferences as in society. A very few friends only had perceived the deviation of his ideas, which led him to believe that many people were opposed to him, and that he was surrounded with enemies.

I was one of the first to whom he confided his troubles; they were occasioned, at this moment, by the pretended enmity of Count de Goërtz, the minister of Prussia. He fancied that this minister had gained over his servants, and paid some workmen to keep up, every night, a dreadful noise near his house in order to break his rest.

I was grieved at this strange mistake; I kept his secret, but all my efforts were exerted in vain to bring him back to reason. Some months afterwards, I became, in my turn, the object of his uneasiness; no sooner did I speak to any one in a low voice, than he fancied I spoke ill of him, and warmly upbraided me for so doing. At last, as the Empress determined that one of the old comedies of our stage, *the Strange Man*, should be performed in her presence at the Hermitage. My unhappy Spaniard persuaded himself that I had introduced into the piece some verses intended to describe him, and to turn him into ridicule; in vain, out of compassion for his weakness, I shewed a book printed a long time back, which contained that comedy; nothing could remove his impression.

Count de Cobentzel and the Duke de Serra Capriola, the Neapolitan minister, soon became his confidential friends, and not long afterwards, the objects of his suspicions; he accused the one, of preventing all the women and girls of St. Petersburgh from yielding to his wishes, and the other, of forbidding every watchmaker from selling him a watch that might correctly indicate the hour.

We were much afflicted at finding so worthy a man tormented by cares which no attentions of friendship could mitigate. His condition subjected us to another kind of uneasiness, when we were ordered by our courts to communicate to him the details of the secret negociation relative to the fourfold alliance.

Having observed, however, that in his political conferences and in his letters, his reason was entire and undisturbed, we took courage, hoping that his condition would have no dangerous influence upon the matters entrusted to us.

Our security was not, unfortunately, of long duration; he withdrew more and more from us, and suddenly joined the Prussians, the English, and the Portuguese, who were raising every obstacle against our negociations; and we learned, that viewing his secretary of legation as one of his enemies, he had actually shut him up under lock and key during twenty-four hours, and taken his private cyphers from him.

Under these perplexing circumstances, and being desirous of avoiding, as much as possible, any eclat, we agreed, by the advice of Count de

Cobentzel, to consult the Vice Chancellor on the subject. "A few days back," he said to us, "notwithstanding the just consideration I have for "you, I should have had some difficulty in crediting your assertions, having always found the "person in question to be a very enlightened, "prudent, and sensible man; added to which, "several members of the diplomatic body said, "rather maliciously, that this minister had become the object of certain intrigues raised for "the purpose of his being removed: this was "even asserted at the court of the Grand Duke. "But the day before yesterday the unfortunate "man wished to have a secret conference with "me; and when we were *tête-à-tête* together, he "complained, in bitter terms, of the general hatred "that pursued him, of the causes of complaint he "pretended to have against you, and of the unfair treatment he received from the ministers of "the Empress, *who*, he alleged, *had given the "strictest orders for watching his conduct, and preventing his servants from waiting upon him. In "short*, he added, with tears in his eyes, *I can "only get a tainted beverage to drink, and do what I "may, it is impossible for me to procure water from "the Neva.* I have informed my sovereign of this "singular accident, and she deems it of importance to take the necessary measures for "inducing his court to recall him. I have seen "his medical man, who assures me, that this "hypocondriacal disposition will be removed by "a milder climate."

This advice being in accordance with our own, we all three met, and called to our secret reunion the secretary of the Spanish legation, and the medical man who attended the patient; and drawing up a statement of facts, supported by the certificates requisite to attest the truth of it, we addressed that document to M. de Galvez, who was then the minister of Spain at the court of Berlin.

We hoped that his recall might thus be effected without any eclat; but, I know not by what act of indiscretion, the very person who was the object of our prudent measures and of our delicate attention was informed of our reunion and of its result.

He warmly demanded explanations, which we refused to give; he complained of it to his new friends, who loudly exclaimed against what they called our intrigues. But this eclat, having produced its natural effect, that of rendering the condition of the patient still worse, he gave such evident signs of his deplorable state of mind, that the calumnies fell to the ground.

M. de Galvez arrived at St. Petersburgh, having received from his court the order to reside there. The patient being sent to a less severe climate, gradually recovered his reason and his health, and we were rescued, in this manner, from the most singular and the most painful difficulties.

The Empress endeavored to impart her activity to her generals. She was delighted to learn that Soltikoff, with a division of the Russian army,

had joined the Austrians, commanded by Prince de Cobourg, who was to make an attack upon Choczim.

I had been communicating to her, at that moment, some intelligence from M. de Choiseul, by which she discovered that the English had almost promised the Porte that they would oppose the passage of the Russian squadron; the Princess, therefore, received with coldness the assurance given to her ministers by the representative of England, that the Russian ships should be received in the British ports.

That naval army was hurrying its preparations for putting to sea, without paying much attention to the squadron which the King of Sweden was then arming with great activity. His preparations, however, and his language indicated some alarming projects.

The Russian ministry having asked me if I knew the object of them, I replied, "that it was "not known at Versailles. I am merely directed," I added, "to give the Empress the assurance, "that the King would exert all his influence to "keep the King of Sweden in those pacific dis- "positions which are most becoming his relations "with Russia and with ourselves, and the true "interests of his kingdom."

Prince Potemkin still persevered in his silent reserve; the ardent Nassau was quite impatient at it; and Catherine, justly displeased, gave the strictest orders for establishing regular couriers.

The English cabinet, finding that its insincere

conduct was not well viewed at St. Petersburgh, was not long in openly manifesting its ill will; it declared to the Russian ministry, that it would not permit the admirals of the Empress to freight any transports, or procure any implements of war in British ports. Catherine was not much embarrassed at this, being certain of finding in the Danish roads, what was refused to her in the ports of England.

The campaign was at last opened; the Russian army crossed the Bug and moved towards Oczakoff. The Prince de Nassau descended the Dnieper with a squadron of galleys and floating batteries destined to bombard Oczakoff, in the direction of the Liman, a large gulph, which separates that town from the Crimea.

Notwithstanding the inefficacy of so many attempts, unsuccessfully repeated, the ministers of England and of Prussia still endeavored, by false information, to exasperate the Empress against us. "France," they said, "wishes, in "concert with the Spaniards, to destroy the Rus-"sian fleet in the Mediterranean; and it is be-"cause Spain is little disposed to second her "views, that it has been attempted to represent "the Spanish minister as a madman, in order to "get him replaced by an envoy more tractable, "and less opposed to the French system."

These artful insinuations gave me but little uneasiness, and fell to the ground before the evidence of facts. The secretary of M. de Bulgakoff was at St. Petersburgh, and the Empress was

not ignorant of the manœuvres resorted to at Constantinople by Ainsley and Dietz, the English and Prussian Ministers, in order to bring about a declaration of war, and to prolong its duration.

I felt much more anxiety at the tergiversations of my court, obstructing, as they did, by perpetual delays, the conclusion of an alliance, the signature of which now wholly depended upon itself, since it had received assurances of the moderation of the indemnities that would be required of the Turks; and, even in the event of their madly persisting in the war, Catherine declared to the King that she would always act in concert with him, when raising her pretensions to indemnities, to render them proportionate with the augmentation of her expenses.

What more could be desired? and yet I received no fresh orders, except to declare to the Russian ministry, that all our ports should be thrown open to the naval forces of the Empress.

In the mean while, the celebrated American, Paul Jones, arrived in Russia, seeking, as he always had done, fresh battles and adventures. This naval officer had acquired great renown by his rare intrepidity, having, with his paltry vessel, carried terror to the very coasts of England, and captured a frigate and a man of war.

He brought me no letters of recommendation. The United States, not having been yet recognized by Russia, had no envoy at that court; but I had fought in America; every American appeared to me a companion in arms. Paul Jones

was, like myself, a member of the order of Cincinnatus; and, having no fear of my conduct being disapproved, I presented him to the Empress. This Princess received him with kindness, allowed me to bring him to dine with her, appointed him rear-admiral, and destined him to a command in the Black Sea.

This event greatly alarmed the English factory: it broke out in unbecoming complaints. The British officers, who were serving in Catherine's naval army, joined and consulted together; and declared they would quit the service. It required all the wisdom, influence, and authority of Admiral Greig, to make them desist from such a resolution, so indignant were they at finding, that an elevated rank was conferred upon a warrior whom they styled as a rebel, a pirate, and a felon.

Paul Jones, in pledging his fidelity to Catherine, nobly declared to her, that he could only enter her service upon receiving the assurance that he would, in no case whatever, be required to fight against the French.

I had then attained the highest degree of credit and favor. The Empress, true to her promise, had just developed, with clearness, to the Emperor, what were her pretensions, her views, her system, and the basis of the alliance she was desirous of concluding with us. The Count de Cobentzel and the Russian ministers fancied that every thing was arranged; and I was, perhaps, the only person at St. Petersburgh who did not consider the four-fold alliance as signed.

The plan of this treaty differed little from the one laid down for the treaty of 1756, with the exception that the number of troops, which the contracting parties were each to furnish, was reduced to one half. I had thus carried all the King's views into effect, with regard to our commercial interests, our personal security, our federative strength, our influence, and our dignity; I had succeeded beyond my expectations; I wanted nothing more than a single word; but that word was a decision, and I did not obtain it.

Our immobility gave fresh activity to our rivals. The King of Prussia was augmenting the fermentation in Poland; Gustavus escaped from our influence, and was encouraged by England; he hoped to immortalize himself, by retaking from Russia the provinces lost by Charles XII. The imperial courts were, in vain, urging us to declare ourselves. At last, I received despatches from my court; they were letters full of kindness, honorable praises, splendid gratifications; but without the ample powers I had called for.

Intelligence arrived, in the mean while, that the Pacha had entered the Liman with a strong squadron. The arrival, at the same time, of a courier from Sweden, spread the liveliest alarm in the palace of the Empress, and in the capital. It was ascertained that Gustavus was arming vessels of war, and collecting, in Finland, a force of 30,000 men, which he was to command in person. He had entrusted to his brother, the Duke of Sudermania, the direction of his naval army.

"The King of Sweden," said Count de Razoumowski to Catherine's minister, "had de-
"clared, in open senate, that the armaments and
"the proceedings of Russia, imposed upon him the
"necessity of preparing for war, with the view
"of anticipating the blows which the Empress
"designed to level at him. Having sent," added the Prince, "a courier to Baron de Nolken,
"desiring him to ask of the Russian government
"some amicable explanations, I only received
"haughty and threatening answers, which were
"nearly tantamount to an order to disarm. Un-
"der such circumstances, the national honor and
"security require a display of all the forces at
"the command of Sweden, in order to avoid the
"danger impending over it."

It was said that these words had received the unanimous applause of even the most strenuous advocates for peace. In sending this intelligence, Count Razoumowski communicated that the King of Sweden had endeavored to create a belief, that he acted in conformity with the views of the French court.

The Russian ministers mentioned this to me with uneasiness; and, though they expressed themselves satisfied of our good intentions, they gave me sufficiently to understand, that no one would imagine Gustavus to be so imprudent as to make such an eclat, without being assured of the support of some great powers. The ministers of England and Prussia, in order to augment

their suspicions, loudly affected to blame the conduct of the King of Sweden.

Being thus situated, and unprovided with orders, I was compelled to answer with the utmost circumspection. I assured the ministers, "that, "under all circumstances, the Empress might "rely upon the King's good offices. I have, "however," I added, "some difficulty in be- "lieving in the war. If Gustavus had formed "the intention of declaring it, he would proba- "bly have delayed until the departure of the "Russian fleet, so as to find the sea unob- "structed. His warlike demonstrations have, "perhaps, no other object than to render a ser- "vice to the Porte, without compromising him- "self, by preventing the naval armament of the "Empress from sailing for the Archipelago."

A despatch, however, of M. de Simolin, Catherine's minister at Paris, soon dispelled the clouds gathering around us: he gave to his court an account of a warm conference between M. de Montmorin and M. de Staël, the Swedish ambassador, and thereby completely proved how far the King was from approving the unexpected armament and the threatening language of Gustavus III.

The Empress could not persuade herself that the monarch of a kingdom, equally insignificant in its territory, its troops and its resources, would venture upon attacking so colossal a power as her own empire. However, by the advice of her mi-

nisters, she ordered a camp of twenty-six thousand men to be formed at Frederiksham. These troops were to be commanded by Count Poushkin, and, under him, by Michelson, who formerly defeated Pugatcheff the notorious brigand.

Unfortunately, those twenty-six thousand men only existed upon paper; scarcely six thousand could be collected. Owing to an imprudent self-confidence, the North of the empire was wholly destitute of troops; Prince Potemkin had drawn them all to the South; he was more active in increasing his forces, than in assigning occupation to them.

His dilatoriness allowed the Captain-Pacha to make his reappearance in the Black Sea with a hundred ships of war, of all sizes, and to reinforce the garrison of Oczakoff with a corps of six thousand Turks.

The Prince de Nassau, always trusting to his good fortune, imprudently advanced against the Turkish Admiral with eighty light vessels, the largest of which were the elegant galleys in which the Empress had sailed. I do not yet understand how an English engineer of great boldness and enterprise, Mr. Bentham, had succeeded in rendering those vessels capable of carrying guns of such heavy metal.

It was intended that Admiral Paul Jones, with a man of war and a frigate, should cover Nassau's advance; but he could, with difficulty, keep up with him, on account of the shallowness of

the water, in the direction where the Prince was attempting to pass.

The heroic deed of a Russian officer was the prelude to the sanguinary actions about to follow: the officer's name was Saken; he commanded a gun-boat. In attempting to reconnoitre the Turks, he was surrounded by them; thus cut off from all hope of safety or of flight, he wrote a note to tell Nassau that he might be easy respecting his fate, for that neither himself nor his crew should fall into the power of the barbarians. A few moments afterwards, he is boarded by three Turkish ships, sets fire to the powder, is blown up, and draws the three hostile vessels into the same fate. Catherine, having it only in her power to reward the widow, bestowed a large pension upon her.

We impatiently expected, from day to day, the arrival of couriers from Prince Potemkin. Count Bezborodko told me, humorously enough, that, with four such heads as Nassau, Paul Jones, Souwaroff and the Captain-Pacha, it would be difficult indeed that extraordinary news should not soon come to hand.

Having obtained, at this period, the rank of Colonel for a French officer of artillery, named Prévôt, I made him proceed immediately to join the Prince de Nassau. That officer, lately in the service of Holland, had been the only one to oppose any resistance to the Prussians.

His inventive genius greatly contributed to Nassau's success; he prepared fusees for him which

were filled with a liquid and inextinguishable wild fire: holes were bored through the fusees, and stopped up with wax, and wires armed with sharp hooks were suspended to them. These fusees, thrown amongst the rigging of an enemy's ship, clung to it and spread torrents of flames which it was impossible to extinguish.

The Prince de Ligne, tired of his inactivity, had repaired to Marshal Romanzoff, whose advanced guard had put to flight a numerous body of Turks. My indefatigable friend, after proceeding with the Marshal to reconnoitre Choczim, returned to Prince Potemkin's army.

The politics of Europe, at this moment, were involved in low intrigues, in doubt, and obscurity: M. de Woronzoff communicated from England that the cabinet of London was urging Gustavus to war; M. de Montmorin wrote me word that he did not believe it; the Swedish minister, M. de Nolken, continued to give me proofs of his personal friendship; but he reposed all his confidence in the English and Prussians.

The flash of arms soon dispelled the mist that obscured the sight of so many politicians. Gustavus, on his arrival in Finland, advanced to the Russian frontier at the head of an army of thirty thousand men; his squadron was, at the same time, cruising in the Gulph.

The Danish government formally declared to the King of Sweden, that it would maintain its neutrality, if that Prince was attacked; but could

no longer retain that character if he was the aggressor.

The intention of the Swedish monarch was no longer doubtful. The Empress alarmed at last, ordered the first battalions of each of the regiments of her guard to be in readiness to march.

The uneasiness of the Princess, in that quarter, was counterbalanced by the arrival of a courier with intelligence of a victory just obtained by Prince de Nassau and Paul Jones over the Turks in the Liman; no details were given; but it was said that the Ottoman fleet had lost three ships.

It was not long before we came to ascertain under what pretence Gustavus III had endeavored to cloak his evident aggression; as that Prince feigned, of late, to be greatly alarmed at the warlike preparations of Catherine, a general uneasiness was spread all over Sweden; and, in order to remove it, Count Razoumowski had lately presented to the Swedish ministry an official note, the object of which was to justify the armaments of his sovereign.

After explaining their real motive, the intention of fighting the Turks in the Archipelago, he brought to their recollection, and enumerated the many proofs of friendship which the Empress had, for many years, given to the King of Sweden. Russia had recently supported Finland, entirely destitute of corn. Compelled, in short, by the war, to fit out a fleet, Catherine the Second had immediately communicated the circumstance to Gustavus III as

well as to the other princes of Europe, her allies.

"The King, however," added Count Razoumowski, "having, in consequence of certain false alarms, " collected considerable land and sea forces, the " Empress had been compelled to adopt similar " measures along her own coasts and frontiers. " At the same time, since the Swedish ministry " appear to give credit to the unfounded reports " which ascribe hostile intentions to her, she is " desirous of convincing the King, the ministry, " *those who have a share in the government, and the* " *Swedish nation*, of the sincerity of her friendly " intentions. She hopes to prove to them, that " she never entertained the idea of attacking " Sweden, that her armaments are purely of a " defensive nature, and that her only wish is to " keep up the harmony which subsisted between " her and the King."

Gustavus, tied down by the constitution, which did not allow him to embark in an offensive war without the consent of the states, was desirous to make it appear that he had been attacked, whilst he was the agressor: the Russian minister's note, irritated therefore, instead of calming him.

The Grand Master of the Ceremonies came, by his command, to declare to Count Razoumowski, " that in using the expressions, *those who have* " *a share in the government, and the Swedish nation*, " he had repeated the language of the former " envoys of Russia, which was no longer a be- " coming one, since the King alone governed his

" kingdom, and since the constitution had un-
" dergone a change.

" Consequently," said the declaration, " this
" Prince, unwilling to believe that Count Razou-
" mowski was authorized by his sovereign to hold
" a similar language, could no longer admit him
" as an accredited minister, and forbade his ad-
" ministration from holding any intercourse with
" him; out of respect, however, for the character
" with which he was vested, he allowed him eight
" days to quit the kingdom; at the end of that
" time, he would find vessels ready to convey him
" to Russia,"

Razoumowski, after having obtained, with some difficulty, a copy of this declaration, replied: " that, with respect to his departure from Sweden, " he was unable to conform to the King's inten-
" tion, as he could not quit his post without an
" order from his sovereign."

I was at the Hermitage, on the day of the arrival of this intelligence at St. Petersburgh. The Empress spoke to me with much warmth, of what she called *a prank* of Gustavus, and asked me what I thought of it.

" What to me, Madam," I replied, " appears
" most surprising in this affair is, that such praise-
" worthy attention for a free people should pro-
" ceed from the minister of an absolute monarch;
" and that the King of such a people should be
" offended at it."

I learned, however, that the ministers of the Princess blamed Count Razoumowski, for having

proceeded too quick in the matter, since he was only authorized to present his note, in the event of the Swedish ministry demanding some explanation from him.

He might have been carried too far by his zeal; but, in reality, the reproach was uncalled for; witnessing, as he did, the spread of false rumours, having for their object to give uneasiness to Sweden, he must have felt it necessary, openly to declare, not only to the King, but to the nation, and even to Europe, the pacific intentions of his sovereign.

There was an immediate probability of war; the Empress alone persisted in doubting it. In vain her ministers had united to prevail upon her to delay the departure of her fleet, in order to protect the coasts; three Russian ships of war and three frigates had already set sail.

They met the Swedish naval forces, who demanded the salute. Catherine's admiral refused it, in conformity with the treaty of Abo, which interdicted all military honors, when the ships were out of harbor. But the Swedish admiral having given notice that the Duke of Sudermania was on board his ship, the Russian admiral replied: "that he would willingly give the salute "to the King's brother." It took place accordingly.

The Empress, in order to reconcile what prudence and dignity alike demanded of her, had confined herself to desist from recognising the Baron de Nolken, as an accredited minister, and to treat

him as her own minister had been treated in Sweden.

Although Count Bezborodko had told me that he thought it very probable a treaty of subsidy would be concluded between England, Prussia, and Sweden, the English and Prussian ministers openly declared, that their courts disapproved of the conduct of the King of Sweden. For my part, being ignorant of the real intentions of my court, though I suspected what they were, I confined myself to holding a conciliatory and moderate language.

At last the storm broke out; and, to the great astonishment of Europe, Gustavus III, who, during the whole course of his reign, and especially since he had recovered the authority wrested from his father, had displayed great intelligence, wisdom, moderation, and generosity, despatched by a courier, and ordered a secretary of legation, named Schlaff, to deliver to the Russian ministry, the most unmeasured and threatening note, containing propositions so haughty and unbecoming, that they appeared devoid of all sense, particularly as they were directed by the King of a weak state to so formidable an empire.

The conclusion of this document is too curious not to be given *verbatim;* it was drawn up in the following terms: " These are the circumstances " under which the King has repaired to Finland " at the head of his army, and demands a precise " and definitive answer, which will determine " peace or war. The conditions under which the

" King proposes peace to the Empress, are: First. " That Count Razoumowski be punished in an " exemplary manner for all his intrigues in Swe- " den, however unsuccessful they may have been, " which have tended to disturb the friendship, con- " fidence and harmony, formerly subsisting be- " tween the two empires; in order that those, who " might be disposed to tread in his footsteps, should " be discouraged from ever interfering in the in- " ternalconcerns of an independent kingdom.

" Secondly. That, in order to indemnify the " King for the expenses to which the armaments " may have subjected his Majesty, the burden of " which ought not to be imposed upon his people, " the Empress will cede, in perpetuity, to the King " and the Swedish crown, every part of Finland " and Carelia, together with the government and " town of Kexholm, that had been ceded to Rus- " sia by the peace of Nistadt and Abo, and will " re-establish the former demarkation of frontier " at Systerbeck.

" Thirdly. That the Empress will accept of " the King's mediation to restore peace between " her and the Ottoman Porte, and will authorize " his Majesty to offer to the Porte the cession " of the Crimea and the restoration of her fron- " tiers as they existed before the war of 1768; " and, as a pledge of the sincerity of those offers, " that the Empress will begin by disarming her " fleet; that she will recall such of her ships as " have already left the Baltic; withdraw her troops " from the new frontiers; and allow the King to

" remain armed, until the peace shall have " been concluded between Russia and the Porte.

" The King expects a reply in the affirmative, or " otherwise ; and he cannot allow of the smallest " modification to these proposals, without com- " promising the glory and interests of his people.

" This is what the undersigned has the honor " to state, by the King's order, to his Excellency " the Vice-Chancellor, all which he begs the " minister will lay, as soon as possible, before " the Empress, in order to enable him to commu- " nicate the answer to the King, his master, with- " out loss of time.

" St. Petersburgh, July 1st, 1787.

(*Signed*) G. DE SCHLAFF,

" Secretary of Legation, only member of " the King's mission at the imperial court " of Russia."

It is much easier to conceive than to express the surprise created by so singular a declaration. The Grand Seignior, himself, would hardly have dared to transmit such a document to a weak hospodar of Moldavia.

The Empress, after mentioning it to me, with an indignation mixed with irony, asked me what I thought of it. " It seems to me, Madam," I replied, " that the King of Sweden, deceived by " a flattering dream, fancies that he has already " obtained three brilliant victories over your Ma- " jesty."

" And if he had gained them, Count," rejoin-

ed Catherine with warmth, " were he even in " possession of St. Petersburgh and Moscow, I " would still shew him of what a woman of high " character is capable, at the head of a brave " and devoted people, and standing erect on the " ruins of a great empire."

It is very clear that the King of Sweden, being unaided in his attack upon Russia, must have expected, even in the event of success, to be soon overwhelmed by a junction of the forces of so powerful a monarchy; but, on the other hand, the existing circumstances were favorable to him; and, as owing to an inconceivable neglect, he was taking the Russians off their guard, nothing was easier for him than to expel, for a moment, the Empress from her capital, and recover possession of Livonia.

This province was only defended by two regiments; the pretended Russian army of twenty six thousand men, did not yet amount to more than six thousand effective troops; and, notwithstanding every effort, there was no hope that it would be made to amount to twelve thousand, in less than a fortnight. Nothing was wanting to the Swedes but a fortunate act of temerity, a rapid march; but Gustavus, prompt in his threats, was slow in acting upon them.

At every moment, however, we expected his arrival; it was ascertained that he had the presumption to invite the ladies of Stockholm, to the ball he promised to give them at Petershoff, and to the *Te Deum* he intended to celebrate in the

cathedral of St. Petersburgh, on an early day which he actually named.

The capital was a prey to the utmost confusion and uneasiness; the coachmen, servants and workmen of the city, young and old, were brought together, equipped and exercised with the utmost hurry. I have still in my possession a caricature, made at that time, in which were humorously pictured those grotesque and colossal recruits, drilled to marching and to exercise by children taken from the imperial military school, who were mounted on chairs or benches, and made those gigantic and long bearded clowns hold up their heads and chests, and shoulder their arms.

It was soon ascertained that the King of Sweden had entered Nislot, of which he was cannonading the fort, and that his army was marching upon the small town of Fredericksham which was incapable of resisting a serious attack.

The rumour then spread in every direction that the palace was all in alarm; that the jewels, furniture, objects of value, and private papers of the Empress were packing up; that a great number of horses were in readiness at every post; that Catherine, in short, taken by surprise and quite defenseless, was to depart in the night and fly to Moscow.

The foreign ministers were not a little perplexed at this critical moment; each of them, having a courier ready to start, feared to communicate a false intelligence to his court, if the event should con-

tradict appearances and every information hitherto received; on the other hand, it would have been the height of ridicule in them to neglect acquainting their government with such a catastrophe, and to delay the announcement, until the occurrence had happened.

Being in a state of as great uncertainty as every one else, I repaired to the Hermitage, hoping that my eyes, my ears, some indiscretion or lucky chance, would enlighten my doubts; this chance came in to my aid.

The Empress called me, as soon as I caught her eye; and, after speaking about indifferent matters, she said: "Diplomacy must be hazarding "at present many conjectures; are there many "reports spread about town?"

Suddenly mustering up resolution at this moment, and endeavoring to discover, in her countenance, the impression that would be made by a rather unexpected observation, I replied: "A "very important, a very strange one, Madam, is "abroad, which is however given out as certain; "it is that your Majesty is to depart for Mos-"cow on this, or the following night."

"Have you, Count, given credit to it?" said the Princess with immoveable calmness. "Ma-"dam," I answered, "the sources from whence "the rumour is derived, give it a great appear-"ance of probability; your character alone can "induce me to doubt the truth of it."

"You are right," rejoined Catherine; "hear "what I have to say: the rumor is occasioned by

" my having ordered that five-hundred horses " should be immediately collected at every post " along the road to Moscow, but with no other " view than to bring up, in all haste, the regiments " I have called for. I remain ; be assured of it. I " know that your brother ministers from foreign " courts are at present much at a loss to know " what they ought to think, what to write or sup- " press. I wish to spare you this embarrassment; " you may be satisfied that you have guessed bet- " ter than the rest; write, therefore, to your court, " that I remain in my capital; and that, if I " should quit it, it would only be to go and meet " the King of Sweden."

I believed in this assurance, and especially in the pride which had dictated it. I since learned, however, from persons admitted into her closest intimacy, that, whilst this short crisis lasted, the resolution of the Princess had not always remained unshaken, and there had been moments when the fear of falling into the hands of her enemy, gaining the ascendancy over her heroic pride, had occasioned the hasty packing up and preparations for departure, the rumour of which had been so rapidly spread.

Be that as it may, she remained. M. de Nolken, the Swedish minister, was directed to depart; but he answered, like Razoumowski, that he would wait the orders of his master.

On the 22d July, the Russian and Swedish naval forces met, and fought a sanguinary action ; each fleet lost a ship, and claimed the victory.

Admiral Greig was slightly wounded, but he continued to keep the sea; whilst the Duke of Sudermania returned to the Swedish ports. This battle of Hoghland appeared, nevertheless, sufficiently advantageous to the Russians arms to be celebrated by a *Te Deum*, at which I was present.

Gustavus III lost three weeks before Fredericksham, owing to a hesitation, the causes of which were unknown to us. The Grand Duke, Paul Petrowitz, took his departure to join the army in Finland, which was encamped at Wiburg; that army, having received reinforcements, already amounted to twelve thousand men. The Prince only witnessed some slight skirmishes; there were great demonstrations on both sides, but little fighting.

The joy occasioned, in the capital, by the *Te Deum*, was rather disturbed by the arrival of three large Russian men of war, which returned to Cronstadt greatly disabled.

M. de Montmorin wrote me word, that the King entirely disapproved of the conduct of the King of Sweden. According to M. de Montmorin, the language of this Prince should have led to the expectation of such conduct from him, for it was known that he had publicly uttered these remarkable words: "A war is necessary for characterising a reign."

Some false information and bad advices had influenced the rash aggression of Gustavus. By the interference of the Prussians and the English, he had, in the September of the preceding year, con-

cluded a treaty with the Porte, which promised him a subsidy of fourteen millions of piasters.

The Prince had, subsequently, been persuaded that the scarcity existing in Russia, and the Turkish war, would render it impossible for the Empress to resist his attack. He was farther told, that the Russian fleet was ill equiped, and armed only by recruits; he was more likely to give ready credit to these false assertions, as they were believed every where, even by our own cabinet.

It was imagined, at Versailles, in spite of my despatches to the contrary, that the strength of the Russian army existed more in appearance than in reality. I pointed out to my court the falsehood of those reports. There is no doubt that, in the North, the Russians were few in numbers; but they occupied the head of every defile that could facilitate their entrance into Sweden, and keep the Swedes out of the Russian territory.

However, if the King of Sweden, by his presumptuous threats, his misplaced boasting, and his promises of *Te Deums* or balls, in anticipation of victory, had been wanting in propriety, it must be acknowledged that Catherine, on her side, was not more observant of it, and that she was deficient in those common attentions which are due from one Sovereign to another.

She caused to be composed and represented, on her theatre, a burlesque opera, where the person of Gustavus III was disguised in a grotesque manner. He was exhibited in the form of a blustering captain, a dwarfish prince. This searcher

for adventures, guided by the advice of a mischievous fairy, was represented selecting, in an old arsenal, the armor of an ancient and celebrated giant, whose helmet, when placed upon his head, would come down to his belly, whilst the boots would reach his waist; thus equipped, he confined his exploits to the attack of a wretched fort, the commandant of which, an invalid, sallied out with a garrison of three men, and put the ridiculous knight-errant to flight with no other weapon than his crutch.

So far from being amused, I was vexed at this representation; and the Empress, who received many awkward and insipid compliments on the occasion, might, I trust, have discovered by my countenance, as well as by my silence, how much I felt grieved at seeing so great a Princess demeaning herself in this manner, and lessening her character, by giving too much way to a childish resentment.

The cause of the hesitation of Gustavus shortly became apparent; the army of Finland, and even the Swedish army, having given indications of discontent, had been induced, by ardent and restless minds, to break out into open revolt. They shewed little inclination for engaging in an offensive and unconstitutional war.

The agitators of the revolt persuaded the army that some pretended Cossacks, to whom the first hostilities had been ascribed, were no others than Swedish soldiers, disguised by the King into Cos-

sacks, by means of dresses taken from the Opera at Stockholm.

The frequent communications carrying on between Russia and Swedish Finland, obtained the more credit for these insinuations, as the absolute want of troops, in the northern part of Russia, was soon known, as well as the extraordinary alarm felt at St. Petersburgh on the approach of so unexpected a war; the aggression of Gustavus was evident from that moment.

In vain this Prince had flattered himself that the appearance of his fleet on the coast of Livonia would excite disturbances in that province, formerly a Swedish one; every thing had remained quiet; the naval engagement had afforded him no advantage; no success had yet inflamed the courage of the Swedes. The progress of discontent was rapid, the Swedish and Finish troops withdrew to the distance of twenty-five wersts from Fredericksham, without receiving orders to do so.

The King of Sweden fell back quite disconcerted, made a useless attempt at effecting a landing and an invasion on the coast of Finland, and afterwards shut himself up, with twelve thousand faithful troops, within the intrenched camp of Kimengorod, which was protected by lakes, by a river, by abatis, by the sea and by a flottilla of galleys; it was an almost unassailable position, though rather a singular one for a King who had, at first, assumed the tone of a conqueror.

Two letters, written by this monarch to one of his most intimate friends, Baron d'Armfeld, will prove better than any other statement, his presumptuous confidence when he quitted Stockholm, and his profound grief, when the caprices of fortune and the insubordination of his troops had dispelled every illusion.

LETTER FROM GUSTAVUS III. TO BARON D'ARMFELD.

On board the *Amphion*, at anchor in the roads of Fiederholmerna, the 24th of June 1788.

" We have at last set sail, my dear friend, and " though we are not yet very far, nothing is " wanting but a good wind to favor us, and car- " ry us to Finland. Nothing could have a more " grand and imposing effect than my departure. " I had told you that I would conduct myself " with calmness, and subdue nature which was " working within me, at the moment of a long se- " paration ; well, my friend, this was less diffi- " cult than I had imagined ; the recollection of " the great enterprise I was going to attempt, " the people collected on the shore to witness " my departure, and of which I considered myself " the avenger, the idea that, through me the down- " fall of the Ottoman empire is about to be re- " venged, and that my name will be known in " Asia and in Africa ; these various images, which " presented themselves at once to my mind, have " acquired such an ascendancy over my feelings,

" that I have never experienced less emotion at " my departure than at this moment, when I am " proceeding to encounter a positive danger.

" These were the events of the day, in the " order in which they occurred: at 6 o'clock I " repaired to the Senate, where I named Counts " de Dyben and Rosen, Senators of the kingdom. " Count de Dyben is entrusted *ad interim*, with " the ministry of foreign affairs, during the ab- " sence of M. d'Oxenstiern. I next delivered " to them their instructions, addressed them a " compliment; and the *Drotz* replied to me in the " name of the whole Senate; they rose, and " kissed my hand.

" In the meanwhile, M. Bredoire, the intro- " ducer of the Ambassadors, went to the Rus- " sian minister, who had been apprized of his " coming by a note from Count Oxenstiern, but " not of the subject of his visit, which he be- " lieved to be for the purpose of acquainting him " with the hour fixed upon for the audience he " had solicited, with a view to present his letters, " containing the announcement of the birth of a " Princess, of which the Grand-Duchess had " lately been delivered.

" M. Bedoire informed him that I was highly " offended at the expressions in the ministerial " note he had presented last Thursday, the ten- " dency of which was to separate my person from " the cause of the state; but that, being still un- " willing to believe the Empress could sanction " those expressions, I preferred to ascribe them,

" exclusively, to the minister, as it was perfectly " in harmony with the conduct he had held during " the whole winter; that I gave him to know I " could no longer consider him henceforward as " an accredited minister, and desired he would " quit Stockholm in eight days; that I had ordered " a vessel to be in readiness for him, and that an " admiralty officer was instructed to take him " back to St. Petersburgh; that, with respect to " the other parts of the note which he had delivered " in to me, I should, when at the head of my " army, cause an answer to be given by my mi- " nister at St. Petersburgh.

" The Rubicon is now passed; I announced to " the Senate this resolution which was already " carried into effect; and a very detailed note was " sent to the other foreign ministers, nine in " number.

" After the sitting, I went to the Hall of the " Chapter, where the knights and commanders of " orders were already assembled; I held a chapter " for the purpose of arranging the affairs of " the orders during my absence. As all the officers " were absent, the Drotz took upon himself the " duties assigned to the Chancellor; the King- " at-Arms performed the office of Treasurer, and " the Herald of the Order, that of Chamberlain; " Hansvorth performs the latter office.

" I then announced that I had established a " new order of the sword, which was never to " be given except in Sweden in a time of war, " (the articles to be published by the order). I

" declared, at the same time, in my own name " and in that of my brothers, that we should " only claim for ourselves this mark of military " distinction, after having deserved it in the opi- " nion of the army.

" When the chapter was over, I returned home, " and delivered into the custody of the cham- " ber council, the diamonds of the crown and my " private jewels.

" At three quarters after eight there was a " court circle: all those of my suite, who have " admission to my white apartment, were pre- " sented by me to the Queen. I then went " round the apartment, and took leave of all the " ladies present.

" The doors were next thrown open, and " we proceeded to the gallery, where I held the " customary circle, at the conclusion of which, I " retired, preceded by halberdiers, pages, the " court and the senate: I held the Queen's right " hand, and the Duke of Ostrogothia her left. My " son led the Duchess: and the rest of the la- " dies, and of the court, followed me without any " order, through an immense crowd of people of " all ages and conditions. In this manner we " proceeded to the shore where a large galley " was waiting. The Queen stopped at the first " landing place of the harbor; I embraced her " as well as my son and sister-in-law: this was " to me a painful moment. I bowed to all the " ladies, and taking my brother by the hand, I " descended the steps of the harbor, where the

" Senate had formed itself in two lines, the Drotz " on the first step, and so on. I gave them my " hand to kiss, and then ascending the galley " with my brother, the three captains of the " guards, the three first gentlemen of my cham- " ber, the chief master of the horse, the first " general, the lieutenant colonel of the guards " and young Wrede, I gave orders for the galley to " clear the harbor, in the midst of the general " acclamations of the people, and of all the ves- " sels at anchor in the harbor, which were dis- " tinctly heard; I then stopped the galley and " answered by two *hurras*.

" In this manner I traversed the harbor to " get on board the *Amphion*, which was lying " quite close to the island of Ships. I ordered " the signal of departure to be hoisted; but, as " it was a perfect calm, and the file of twenty- " eight galleys occupied an extensive space, I " remained at anchor to see them pass, expecting " every moment the arrival of my sister who " was travelling night and day to join me. The " calm detained me until five o'clock in the morn- " ing, at which hour my sister arrived; I have " therefore had the satisfaction to see her."

LETTER OF GUSTAVUS III. TO BARON D'ARMFELD.

Dated from Hussula, the 5th. August 1788.

" I say nothing to you of my grief and my des- " pair; you share them with me. It only be-

" comes weak characters to complain; others " concentrate their troubles within their own " breasts, and seek the means of repairing them. " I cannot yet discover any, to remedy the evil " and put an end to the war; but I do see the " means of sustaining our reputation.

" As soon as the magazines are established at " Angela, we must then march upon Wilmanstrad " with the troops that have remained faithful to " us, and fight and conquer General Michelson. " If we are defeated, all is over; but the repu- " tation of courage will cling to us. If victorious, " I may then propose peace, and reappear at " Stockholm without shame.

" At three o'clock this evening we are to march " upon Summa, where we will wait for you, halt " there if necessary, in order not to desert you, " and afterwards encamp at Jugfort and Kym- " mengrad.

" Curb your zeal, my dear friend; recollect " that it behoves us as much to support misfor- " tunes with dignity as to act with moderation " under success. Attached as you are to the " state and to me, you cannot but share in the " grief of our situation; but, as a private indivi- " dual, you must feel a satisfaction, at being the " only person in our army who has had any " success, who has retained possession of his " post, and given any annoyance to the enemy.

" Farewell; I hope to see you to night; I feel " a consolation in pouring my cares into the bo- " som of friendship; the goodness of heaven

" affords me the means of doing so. In striking,
" it often administers relief."

I have been careful in relating every particular that my position enabled me to ascertain, on the subject of the unexpected war so vauntingly commenced by the King of Sweden. But the respect which is due to a celebrated Prince, and the impartiality which I always desire to take for my guide, require, that in recalling an act of temerity, which the chivalrous character of Gustavus, and his too ardent thirst for glory, prompted, I should not confine myself to sketch his portrait, such as it was then drawn by his enemies.

A few words will suffice, to do justice to a King who, recovering from his first reverses, and opposing the firmness of a noble character to the caprices of fortune, to intrigue and to revolt, saved his reputation, revived the courage of his army, strengthened the fidelity of all, fought with bravery, plucked glorious laurels in the midst of his disasters, and terminated a war, imprudently commenced, by an honorable peace.

Gustavus III has acted too conspicuous a part in Europe, in our own times, not to couple, with the reproaches directed against him by his own enemies, the just eulogiums which he obtained by his intelligent mind, the elevation of his character, his love of his country, and the brilliant qualities that secured to him the affection of its most honorable men.

As I am writing Memoirs, and not a history, I shall be brief, and confine myself to show him, such as he was described to me by one of his greatest favorites, Baron d'Armfeld, and by M. d'Ehrenstrom, one of his generals, who, after his death, still retained the warmest enthusiasm for him.

It is impossible to speak of this Prince, without mentioning his country, to which he was most strongly attached, and some of the heroes of Sweden, in whose footsteps he attempted to tread, with an ardor, which made him overlook the difference of times and circumstances.

That passion made him lose sight of the wise counsel given to him by Frederick II. This great man, when congratulating him on the happy revolution which had re-established his authority addressed these words to him: "Enjoy your "success; labor to restore peace and good order "in your country; but recollect that, at present, "when there exist three or four great powers, "which are, each of them, able to set on foot three "or four hundred thousand men, a King of "Sweden can no longer pretend to the glory of "arms or of conquests."

If Gustavus had listened to him, as he reigned over a country which is partly covered with sand and ice, and reckons only two millions five hundred thousand inhabitants, he would not have presumed to attack an empire reckoning thirty millions, and defended by five hundred thousand soldiers.

But the King of Sweden, disregarding the ob-

jects that surrounded him, only fixed his eyes on the portraits of Gustavus-Vasa and Gustavus-Adolphus. He took the latter, especially, for his model; he recalled to mind, with a transport of joy, the glorious successes of that hero, who conquered Germany at the head of fifteen thousand Swedes, and proved to Ferdinand, by the strength of his sword, that a great man sports with every measure taken against him, removes all disproportions, and triumphs over the most formidable power.

Ferdinand had dared to utter a proud expression against Gustavus-Adolphus: "that King of "Snow will soon melt away, since he presumes "to measure his strength with the Jupiter of Eu-"rope," a ridiculous and futile prediction! The *King of Snow* shook the throne of the *German Jupiter* to its very foundations.

Gustavus III, excited by such an example, forgot the great change operated on the minds of his people, by the despotism of Charles XI, by the state of exhaustion to which Sweden had been reduced, owing to the mad heroism of Charles XII, and by the cruel losses to which the ambition and absolute power of this monarch had subjected the nation.

He ought, however, to have had before his mind, all the obstacles which he had to conquer before he could restore any degree of strength to his own authority, which had been almost entirely seized upon by a jealous aristocracy.

It will be recollected, in fact, that the four or-

ders of the state having, in 1720, assumed the sovereignty to themselves, royalty presented no longer any thing beyond an empty pageantry, and the King, obliged to sign all the resolutions of the states, was in reality no more than the servant of the diet, and the president of the council of state.

In this manner reigned Ulrica Eleanor, her husband, and their successor elect, Adolphus-Frederick, Duke of Holstein, who was the father of Gustavus III.

It is a fact, that this royal infant had scarcely left the cradle, when he gave the most brilliant hopes to the partisans of the fallen monarchy; he was only seven years of age, when a Swedish General said to him laughing, "that he would "prove a second Gustavus-Adolphus." The august child replied: "What you tell me at present, "by way of flattery, may prove true at a future "time." His young imagination was chiefly stored with traits in the history of the two Gustaveuses, of Christina, and of Charles XII, of engagements fought with the Germans, Russians and Poles, of the battles of Lutzen, Narva and Pultawa.

Whilst he grew up, and was fed with these dreams of glory, the greatest disunion reigned in the diets, and Sweden was constantly agitated by two factions, the *caps* and *hats;* the first wanted to purchase tranquillity by a state of dependence upon Russia, and by its friendship; the second only sighed after the revival of

the former glory; it hoped to shake off the yoke, and, by the aid of France, to reconquer Livonia as well as Finland. The *caps* were zealous defenders of republican aristocracy; the *hats* secretly desired that the King should recover his authority.

Then it was that Gustavus was heard to say with a sigh, in speaking of his father: "The "King is now nothing more than the *puppet* of "the state, only dressed up in regal attire on "certain solemn occasions."

The disturbances were increasing in the diets; the two parties alternately wrested from each other the preponderating influence; at last the old Monarch, exhausted and worn out by humiliations incessantly repeated, tendered his abdication to the diet, who, being unable to compel him to sign certain decrees, directed his letters to be opened, and in order to render his resistance unavailing, affixed the royal signature, by means of a seal, to all public acts.

Young Gustavus, feeling quite indignant, went in person to the council, and took away the seals to return them to his father. He then went upon his travels with his brother, being unable to bear any longer the sight of a degradation which filled him with grief. These two Princes were at Paris in 1771, when they learned the death of the King, their father. Gustavus flew back to Stockholm, and convoked a diet.

It was at this time that the young King appeared worthy of the name he bore; he displayed, by turns, and according to circumstances, the clever-

ness of a well-directed prudence, the goodness of a popular monarch, the foresight of a profound politician, and the promptness of a young warrior.

His first care was, to affect great indifference for the power which the aristocracy had wrested from the throne, and, at the same time, to win the affections of his people by every means in his power. He succeeded so well, that one of those intrepid, plain and open-hearted peasants of Dalecarlia, was one day heard to say to him: "I de- "part well satisfied with thee; I will relate to "my countrymen what I have seen; they will "find in thee a kind father; and if thou shouldst "ever stand in need of thy children, those who "inhabit the three vallies, will hasten to thy "assistance on the first signal thou shalt give "them."

Gustavus beheld, with a secret pleasure, the division which was manifesting itself in the diets, between the nobility and the other three orders. The first excited general discontent, by claiming, with an inflexible pride, every superior employment. The King dissembled the satisfaction which these disunions afforded him, and was increasing the numbers of his partisans with the utmost secrecy.

Shortly afterwards, having brought together one hundred and fifty young officers, commanded by Sprengporten, under pretence of forming a school, he prepared the means of availing himself of the first favorable opportunity for carrying his plans into effect. By stopping the arrival of corn

at a later period, he created a fictitious scarcity, which increased the popular discontent.

A new diet was assembled; it was composed of his chief opponents, partisans of England and Russia, who drew closer the ties of alliance, which united Sweden with both nations. An assembly, so composed, no longer allowed him to delay his plans; he must either be entirely overcome by it, or gain the ascendancy.

Artfully withdrawing the attention of his enemies, from the real danger that threatened them, he caused a feigned insurrection in Finland and Scania. In the mean time Sprengporten, Hellichius, and many officers, gained over by the King and his brother, published writings which ascribed the famine to the influence of the Russians and the English, and to the corruption of the diet. The people eagerly listened to these reports.

At the same time, the standard of insurrection was raised at Christianstad; on the receipt of this news, the Duke of Sudermania collected five regiments, and placed himself at their head, taking care to persuade the soldiers, that the reexisted a conspiracy planned by the Russians against the King's life.

The diet, at last feel alarmed at all these movements; they arm two corps of troops, upon whose fidelity they could place reliance. They direct Rudebeck to watch the King, and even to arrest him, if any indications should lead him to

believe, that the Prince has any understanding with the insurgents of Christianstad.

Gustavus had foreseen this measure: he is closely watched and questioned; but no uneasiness, no agitation betray his secret. "The news "you announce to me," said he to Rudebeck, "is very extraordinary and very unlikely."— "What is much more extraordinary," said Count "Ribbing," fixing his eyes upon him, "is, that the "officer on duty at the gate of Christianstad, has "affirmed to General Rudebeck, that all that had "happened there, was done by your Majesty's "order."—"Well then, he is mistaken," coldly replied the King without shewing any emotion.

Rudebeck, having entered the apartment of Gustavus on the following day, without being previously announced, he found him engaged in carelessly drawing a pattern of embroidery, for a lady of his court; and the General said on retiring: "Indeed, that good young man is dangerous to "no one in the world."

His brother Charles continued to advance with his five regiments. The diet much alarmed, forbids all the piquets of the town to allow the King to pass. In the midst of this agitation, Gustavus gathering round him a brilliant court, and affecting the indifference of levity, seems wholly absorbed in pleasures; but he apprizes his friends, by a secret message, that the moment for acting had arrived.

The council wanted to compel him to shew his

brother's letters; he fearlessly repairs to it, and refuses to yield to that unbecoming demand. Some councillors exclaim, that his person must be secured; at this moment he precipitately rushes out, mounts a horse, flies to the arsenal, of which his secret agents had just taken possession, returns to the castle, finds the mounted guard at the gate, calls the officers to him, represents to them, in warm colors, the misery of the people, and *the weight of the chains which have been forged with the gold of foreigners.*

" I declare to you," he said, " that there is not " a Swede who detests absolute sovereignty more " than I do. Forced to defend my liberty, " and that of the kingdom, against insolent aristo- " crats, I ask you, whether you will swear to " me that fidelity, of which the Swedish nation " has given so many glorious proofs to Gustavus " Vasa and to Gustavus Adolphus. In this case, " I will willingly risk my life for the happiness of " my country, and your own." All except three, took the oaths he asked of them.

At this moment, the commandant of the troops of the diet announces, that he desires to speak to the King. " Let him repair to the council, said " the King; there I will explain myself to him."

Gustavus ties a white handkerchief to his arm; it was the signal agreed upon with his friends. The officers of the regiments of guards, and of the artillery, follow his example; without loss of time, he surrounds the council of state with pi-

quets, and repairs to the parade for the purpose of haranguing the soldiers.

This was the critical and decisive moment; after some hesitation, he goes through the ranks, persuades the minds of the soldiers, wins their hearts, and rekindles their fidelity; they all swear to follow and defend him. A single voice ventured, by a negative, to disturb the harmony of acclamations.

In other parts of the city, however, false rumors were spread in order to make it be believed, that he was arrested. The King rides in every direction sword in hand; at sight of him, the people break out into transports of joy. At this moment, Rudebeck grown furious, was going about the town, exclaiming in vain, "To arms, my "brethren! Swedes to arms! or your liberty is "at an end." Gustavus caused him to be arrested, with all the chiefs of the faction of *caps*.

Gustavus, desirous of affording protection to the foreign ministers, and, at the same time, to watch their proceedings, invited them to present themselves at the palace. He there received the oaths of the magistrates, and of the admiralty. All the ambassadors presented their congratulations to him; but those of Spain and France, alone, displayed genuine satisfaction. Thus was effected in a few hours, by the genius of one man, a mighty revolution, which was not stained by a single drop of blood. The deepest tranquillity reigned in and out of the city.

The King wrote to his brother, to send his troops back to their quarters. But it was not enough for Gustavus, to have restored the royal authority by a vigorous act; he wished the nation to sanction so great a change. The Swedish people were collected in an immense plain. All the militias of cities were there under arms. The King appeared, and was greeted with the unanimous cry; "Long live Gustavus, long live the "saviour of Sweden!"

This Prince convoked the states, and appeared there in great pomp. The assembly had been thrown into some confusion by the false report of the approach of some Finish troops; the calm deportment, and the eloquent language of the King dispelled all uneasiness.

The Monarch, giving three blows with the silver hammer of Gustavus Adolphus, called for silence, and read an act, drawn up in fifty-seven articles; wherein he promised to uphold the ancient laws, such as they existed under Gustavus Adolphus, and until 1780; the nation and the King swore mutual fidelity to each other, and the whole ceremony terminated in public thanksgivings.

After exhibiting the character of a skilful, bold, and firm Prince, Gustavus showed himself a great and a good King: he exercised no act of revenge; a general amnesty was proclaimed. The Prince, forgetting the threats and insults offered to his father, said, "Henceforth I will only drink of "the waters of the Lethe." Noble rewards

were granted to Sprengporten, Hellichius, and those officers who had been the first to aid his cause.

His conciliatory language calmed the discontent of some foreign powers. The King, then, wholly gave himself to the duties which his people and his crown demanded of him. He extended his protection to commerce and agriculture, established fabrics and manufactories, distributed corn to the poor, exempted from taxes all parents having four children, triumphed over the prejudices prevailing against inoculation, and guaranteed the freedom of the press by an edict, in which he stated, that a similar freedom did not exist in England, when Charles I. was brought to the scaffold.

"By this freedom only," said the Monarch, "the public administrators are made acquainted "with the mischiefs they have done; it is the "only means through which the nation can cause "complaints to be heard, and, very often, through "which it may be convinced, that those complaints "are unfounded."

There had appeared a satire against the King: he sent for the author, who approached him with fear. "I perceive," said Gustavus, "that you "have great wit; but, to all appearance, very "little bread. It is my wish that you should no "longer be in want, and I appoint you to be the "inspector of my library."

The King favored the working of mines; his œconomy was the means of bringing money back

into circulation; the liberty he allowed to the people restored confidence and public credit. Averse to luxury, this Prince published sumptuary laws, and so clearly pointed out the necessity of them, for a poor nation, that they were attended to.

By the suppression of ancient festivals, he found means to restore twenty-two days in the year to labor; but always chivalric whilst displaying his royal virtues, he wished, in imitation of the fabulous King Arthur, that the protection of orphans and of aged people, as well as the superintendance of hospitals, should be committed to the care of an order of knighthood.

A friend to sciences, the Prince corresponded with many learned men; he restored the university of Upsal, established public academies, wrote several stage productions, and, when he erected a statue to Gustavus Vasa, he composed a lyric poem, and had it performed at Stockholm. The romantic feelings of his youth were often rekindled in his breast; accordingly, he often indulged the public with representations of tournaments and carousals.

During eighteen years of an upright, generous, liberal, and prudent reign, he established his power and his fame on the affections of a loyal and a free people. But, whilst reason led him to maintain a system of peace, a too ardent thirst after glory made him, secretly, desire war; he prepared for it, in anticipation of its occurrence, by building ships and collecting ammunition;

he augmented and trained his army, and exercised it to military manœuvres.

Every thing appeared to smile upon his hopes; having restored order in his kingdom, he travelled through almost every country in Europe; praises were lavished upon him; though his noble qualities were, at times, found to be rather eclipsed by too glaring a vanity, which led him to repeat, on all occasions, the details of the revolution he had effected.

His career was influenced by this mixture of wisdom and pride; the first had procured him uninterrupted happiness during eighteen years; the latter occasioned those storms which, after compromising his crown, ended by raising that spirit of resentment against him, to the perfidious violence of which he, ultimately, fell a victim.

As far back as 1786, a strong opposition had manifested itself among the nobility; it soon became exasperated, owing to the King's warlike ambition. The Prince was incessantly tormented with a restless uneasiness, at finding Russia retaining possession of Livonia, and of a part in Finland.

It was in the hope of being afforded an opportunity of reconquering these provinces, that, listening to foreign insinuations, he concluded a peace with the Porte. It was agreed by this treaty, that, if one of the two powers was attacked by Russia, the other would take it up as a personal offence; and that neither should lay down their arms, without obtaining suitable satisfaction.

We have seen, how much the King of Sweden was mistaken in his expectations; and it is inconceivable, how he could be ignorant of the dispositions of the nobility, and of the intrigues by which his army was worked upon. Relying, too confidently, upon the negligence of the enemy, he considered his triumph as certain, and had forgotten himself so far, as to utter these threatening expressions in the council of state: "Should "fortune favor the arms of my people, of all the "monuments of Russian insolence, I will only "spare the statue of Peter the Great, in order "to engrave upon the pedestal, and immortalise, "the name of Gustavus."

He might, at least for a moment, have realised this threat in the heart of St. Petersburgh, which was wholly defenceless; but the loss of a few days, a naval engagement of doubtful issue, and the revolt of his troops, dispelled for ever his chimerical notions of invasion and conquest. It will, hereafter, be seen that Gustavus, reduced to act on the defensive, derived from his courage the means of re-establishing his fortunes, and of extricating himself, with some share of glory, from so perilous an enterprise.

Whilst the Empress was threatened, by this new enemy, with an attack so wholly unforeseen, her patience was exhausted by the tardy movements of her southern army. Oczakoff was not yet seriously invested. "I believe," wrote the Prince de Ligne to me, "that we have opened "the siege of this place; at least it is imagined

" so, because four bad redoubts have been con-
" structed, at a distance of seven hundred, and
" intrenchments at nine hundred toises, from the
" town. The enemy has not even fired upon our
" workmen, although the two finest moonlight
" nights had been chosen, for carrying on the
" works.

" Potemkin, as if in a state of torpor, nei-
" ther dreamed of fighting, nor of placing him-
" self upon his guard; a few days afterwards,
" his intrenchments were unexpectedly attacked
" by two thousand Turks, who, rushing upon a
" battery defended by the Prince d'Anhalt and
" a single battalion, were on the point of carry-
" ing it. Neither orders nor assistance were sent
" by the Prince.

" He had indulged in rather jesting language,
" upon the restless activity of the Prince de Nas-
" sau; the latter took a noble revenge; having
" landed his troops, and rescued the Prince d'An-
" halt and his battery, he became, himself, the
" bearer to Prince Potemkin, of the report of Ge-
" neral d'Anhalt, who declared that he was in-
" debted to Nassau for his safety. He apologised
" at the same time, in an ironical manner, for
" having presumed to fight, without previously re-
" ceiving the orders of the commander in chief."

The Austrians suffered, at this period, a severe check: the Emperor Joseph having given too great extension to his lines, the Turks broke through them, and availed themselves of that advantage to carry on the greatest excesses in the Bannate.

Under these circumstances, the Prince de Ligne wrote to that Monarch the following letter: "I "hope, Sire, that the month of September will "repair the misfortunes of the Bannate, and the "non-successes of Bosnia.

"Could it be imagined that this Mussulman "empire, with such impaired means, would ex- "pose the Russian empire to so much danger? "The plan of the Turks was excellent; for, if "the King of Sweden had made his attack three "weeks earlier or later, and the Captain-Pacha "had succeeded, as he ought to have done, with "his forest of masts, extending all over the Li- "man, in crushing the wretched fishing-boats, "and paltry galleys, which composed all the "fleet of our romantic navigation of the Borys- "thenes, the King must have arrived at Peters- "burgh and the Pacha at Kherson."

Fortune, at last, which seemed, for a short time, to have abandoned Catherine, returned to favor her; she received the news of a second, and a complete victory, obtained by Prince de Nassau in the Liman. As the large Russian ships and frigates, impeded by the shallowness of the water, could not come up with the flotilla, Paul Jones joined it in person, and offered to Nassau to assist him, with his individual aid and courage, though he endeavored, at the same time, to check his fiery ardour. "We are rushing to certain de- "struction," said he to the Prince; "never was "an attempt made, with a few galleys and flat "bottomed boats, to attack a powerful squadron,

" or ships mounting seventy four or eighty guns;
" it is a rash undertaking; you must necessarily
" be crushed."

" You are mistaken," replied the Prince;
" those giants have no soul; their artillery is de-
" ficient in skill. They know not how to take
" aim; they fire in the air. We shall advance
" upon them under a vault of fire, which will do
" us but little injury; we shall burn and destroy
" them."

His prediction was verified; he blew up six men of war, captured two, and set fire to nearly the whole Turkish fleet. The Captain-Pacha escaped in a sloop; four thousand Turks were taken prisoners. General Souwaroff, by his well directed land batteries, effectually contributed to the victory.

Count Roger de Damas, who commanded twelve gun-boats, entitled himself to well-merited praises, by the intelligence and bravery which he displayed in this action. Nassau made him the bearer, to Prince Potemkin, of the Admiral's flag, taken from the Captain-Pacha. Apraxin was despatched to the Empress.

Potemkin was then encamped near a height, called Novo-Gregori; elated with joy, at the news of the defeat of the Turks, and giving vent to the superstitious ideas, which he had imbibed and retained from his infancy, he throws his arms round Prince de Ligne's neck, and says to him: " You see that
" Church of Novo-Gregori; I have consecrated it
" to my patron saint; and Nassau's fresh engage-

" ment has taken place on the very day after the " good saint's festival. We are still quite close " to his church; well, the Mussulman fleet has " just been set on fire; these are fresh favors from " my patron saint; is not this very clear? I am, " indeed, *the spoiled child of God!*"

This triumph was some consolation to Catherine, for the alarms which the King of Sweden was occasioning to her. She ordered a *Te Deum;* selected, for its celebration, the church of the Fort, which is situated in front of the statue of Peter the Great; a homage worthy of herself and of him.

This Princess told me, that each of the forty-two governments of her empire had just offered to her a battalion; but that she refused them, because the recruits she had drawn from Moscow and St. Petersburgh would be sufficient to enable her to repel the attack of Gustavus.

As she enquired of me whether I had received any news from France, I told her, that it was there imagined she had written a very severe letter to the King of Sweden, which had inflamed the resentment of that monarch. " I am very glad, " Count," she replied, " that you have spoken to " me on the subject. I know that this false re- " port has been spread in many quarters; but I " hope you believe me incapable of telling, what " is not conformable to truth. Well then, you " may repeat my own words: it is a fact that, " since 1785, I have not written a single letter to " the King of Sweden."

I also learned from her, that the Captain-Pacha,

having joined the remainder of his naval forces, still consisting of thirty-five sail, fifteen of which were ships mounting seventy-four or eighty guns, had fallen in with Admiral Woynowitz, in the Black Sea, the latter being in quest of him with seventeen ships of war.

An engagement took place, but was attended with little result. The Turks lost a gun ship; a Russian frigate was so roughly handled, that it was compelled to return to Sevastopol. The Captain-Pacha retreated to the coast of Varna. Woynowitz continued to keep the sea.

In the North, Admiral Greig, went, in vain, in search of the Swedish fleet; he only met four ships, three of which made their escape; the fourth, mounting sixty-four guns, struck upon a rock, and was set on fire by the Russians. Five hundred of its crew were taken prisoners.

Catherine had sent to her Admiral the order of St. Andrew. Greig replied: "This decoration "is only given to men of high birth, or to those "who have signalized themselves by illustrious "deeds; I cannot claim it on either ground. I "shall preserve the order with becoming respect; "but only wear it when I have acquired a title to "do so."

Upon land, nothing remarkable had occurred. Armfeld, after some slight advantages over the Russians, had entrenched himself at Pittis: He retreated with great regularity and self-composure, when the rest of the Swedish army had been suddenly broken up from Fredericksham.

As we were still in ignorance, at the time, of the

insurrection of the Finish army, this sudden retreat excited as much surprise at St. Petersburgh, as the precipitate advance of the Swedes had created alarm. We were vaguely told that the Swedish troops in Finland, though well disposed to repel any invasion, were adverse to an unconstitutional war.

In the meanwhile, M. de Montmorin wrote me word that the King of Sweden had just laid claim to the subsidies promised to him by an old treaty. He received for answer, that, being the aggressor, his claim was unfounded, and that, with respect to the ordinary peace subsidies, the King wished he had it in his power to pay them.

This reply, which was communicated to the Russian ministry, gave great satisfaction, and revived some hopes that the four-fold alliance might at last be concluded. M. de Montmorin was also urging me to hasten the measure, though depriving me of the means of doing so, since he persisted in his refusal to guarantee the integrity of Poland.

Proceeding to the Hermitage, I learned from the Empress, that the King of Sweden, having quitted his camp, had again taken the road to Abo, instead of following, on his return to Stockholm, the road through which he had proceeded in his way to Finland. "This Prince," she said to me, with an ironical smile, "is rather discon-
"certed; his people are aware, that the victo-
"rious Swedish fleets remain constantly shut up

" in port, whilst the unfortunate Russian fleet " constantly keeps the sea."

The Princess ordered her ministers to communicate to us her manifesto against Sweden; it was drawn up with force, dignity, and moderation. But, in making the Danish government acquainted with it, she had expressed herself in these words: " The King of Sweden has impru- " dently drawn his sword, by taking up arms " against me: he must now throw away the " scabbard." Gustavus, being informed of this, said: " These are the very words used by Sixtus " the Fifth, in speaking of the Duke de Guise, the " Balafré: *When a subject*, he said, *draws his* " *sword against his master, he must throw away the* " *scabbard*; as for myself, I do not think I am a " subject of the Empress; and I will do my best " to prove it to her."

It was rather singular to behold two sovereigns, carrying on a rather animated war of words against each other, whilst their respective armies appeared, the one quite astonished at being taken by surprise, the other more disposed to negociate than to fight.

I had just obtained the secret information, that the Finish troops entertained the idea of joining the Russians against their King; what my informer had communicated to me, was a few days afterwards confirmed, by the arrival at St. Petersburgh of a Swedish deserter, General Sprengporten. He had quitted the service of Gustavus,

through disappointment, and came to offer his services to Catherine. This conduct, on his part, made me mistrust the truth of his statements. We soon learned, however, that they were not much exaggerated; and I could, then, fully comprehend the real causes of the sudden disappearance of the King of Sweden.

Gustavus, having confined himself to reconnoitring, in the direction of Fredericksham, towards the latter end of July, appeared to have lost a very precious time without any reasonable motive. Always anxious to avoid assuming the offensive, he hoped that his threats would occasion some act of hostility, on the part of the Russians. Deceived in this expectation, he ordered an advanced movement to be made by Armfeld, who successfully fought a detached body of troops; too ardent, however, in his attack, he was surrounded, and on the point of being taken prisoner.

Gustavus then wrote to him the following note, which indicates the character of his mind; and shews what were his plans: "Instead of praising, "I must scold you; you are indebted to your "blue ribband for all this alarm; no doubt, you "will have been mistaken for my brother or for "myself. A fine business, indeed, if you had "been taken; what a triumph for the Empress, "to have in her power one of the first personages "of my court! We are about to advance with "the army to your assistance. We must give "up Fredericksham, until it can be attacked in "regular form; for England has announced to

" Denmark, that she hoped the latter power " would preserve her neutrality."

It is not easy to conceive why the King should have imagined it to be necessary to besiege, in due form, such a paltry town as Fredericksham. The movements of his heavy artillery being, however, too slow, he had at last resolved to take the town by surprise. His plan was, accordingly, as follows: Hastfelt was to advance by the northern frontier; Armfeld, to defend the important position at Pittis, in order to cover the King's march upon Fredericksham; Siegroth, with some vessels carrying troops intended for effecting a landing, would proceed to the coast at a short distance from St. Petersburgh, and when the latter should have announced, by the firing of guns, that the landing had been effected, Gustavus was to commence the attack upon Fredericksham.

This plan seemed, at first, to work without any obstacle. The signal agreed upon informed the King of the landing of Siegroth, who was in fact, in full march to attack Michelson; but, on a sudden, and whilst executing his movement, he receives an order to re-embark, which object he could not accomplish, without being pursued and severely handled by the Russians.

This is what occasioned the sudden and inconceivable counter-order; Gustavus had no sooner heard the firing of Siegroth's cannon, than he commanded his troops to move, at once, to the attack of Fredericksham; but instead of obeying, they murmur and stop short; the officers leave

the ranks, surround the King, and represent to him, that he ought not to endanger the lives of his subjects without necessity.

The King irritated, commands obedience; upon which, they drop all further disguise, and declare, that they will not take part in an enterprise so contrary to the constitution, as this offensive warfare. "We are ready," they said, "to defend "the country; to spill the last drop of our blood "for it; but we never will consent to attack a "neighbouring state, without any just cause; all "we can do, is to cover the frontier, and protect "it from hostile invasion."

Penetrated with grief and vexation, Gustavus addresses his soldiers, reminds them of the oath they had taken to him; endeavors to rekindle their fidelity and to stimulate their courage; but laying down their arms, they all declare they will not move a single step forward. Thus, under the very walls of an enemy's fort, Gustavus saw this revolt break out, of which he had not received the smallest intimation. He soon discovered, that the object of the chief conspirators was to restore, by the assistance of Russia, the old aristocratic government, such as it existed in 1720.

It will be understood, from these facts, how the King, driven to despair, was under the necessity of ordering Siegroth to re-embark, of giving up all idea of conquests, and of returning to his capital, where he received the intelligence of the armament of the Danes and of the approach of this new enemy, who threatened several of his provinces.

Afterwards, however, when he found the means of bringing back his army to order and submission, those conspirators to whom he granted a generous pardon, were, notwithstanding, severely punished; for, on their return to Stockholm, the people taxed them with cowardice, and insulted them in such a manner that they no longer dared to appear, in uniform, in the streets.

These events dispelled the well-founded uneasiness which the beginning of the war had given to the Empress, by threatening her capital, her fortunes, and her glory, in so unforeseen a manner. She was informed, at the same time, that the bombardment of Oczakoff had commenced.

Prince Potemkin, emerging from his apathy, was about to put himself in motion; but, ever active and indolent at unseasonable moments, he went, without any necessity, accompanied by all his generals, to reconnoitre within half musket shot of the walls of the place. This bravado cost the lives of several Russians; others were wounded; Prince de Ligne had a horse killed under him. The Empress severely blamed Prince Potemkin for that senseless act.

Souwaroff shewed himself equally imprudent; the Turks having made a sortie, this general, after driving them back, pursued them with so much ardor, that when he arrived close to the gates of the town, a firing of grape-shot killed two hundred of his men. In the North, Admiral d'Essen captured seventeen Swedish merchant vessels.

The internal situation of affairs in France, and

the embarrassment in which it involved our government, were so little understood in Russia, at this time, that the Empress persisted in believing, that the conclusion of the treaty of fourfold alliance was near at hand. Her displeasure against the English and the Prussians, made her anxiously desire it; she had, accordingly, requested that the negociation might be continued at St. Petersburgh, instead of being removed to Paris; and, owing to a promise made by M. de Montmorin, of giving an outline of the articles of the treaty, she imagined that I would now receive the ample powers, requisite for terminating that important business.

Count Bezborodko said to me "that she hoped, "that, in the expected outline of articles, the one "which related to the guaranteeing of the Polish "territory, might be modified, but not annulled. "In fact, continued the Count, without this "clause, the treaty would be quite illusory; for it "is only through Poland that the King of Prussia "can attack the imperial courts. As Russia is to "remain neutral between England and France, "and the latter equally so between the Russians "and the Turks, of what advantage would be a "treaty, which would oppose no barrier to the "ambitious views of the King of Prussia?"

As this minister was daily offering to us some fresh concession, he was astonished at our delay. But he was not in the secret; the fact is, that the prime minister, Archbishop of Sens, fearing above all things to commit himself, and to be thereby

involved into a war, was afraid to acknowledge his weakness: in order, therefore, to maintain an exterior of dignity, he wished to have the appearance of negociating, but carefully availed himself of the most frivolous pretences to avoid coming to any conclusion.

All the letters I received from France sufficiently explained those views, in which M. de Montmorin was reluctantly compelled to acquiesce: for, in this particular, his private correspondence greatly differed from his official despatches. Compelled to perform a painful duty, I did my best to support the strange system of our cabinet. "The maritime neutrality of the "Russians," I said, "deprives us of the only va- "luable guarantee we could have, a guarantee "against the English, our personal enemies: and "we do quite enough for you, by embarking into "a war, if the Prussians should attempt to ag- "grandize themselves at the expense of the pos- "sessions of the emperor, or of the Empress, with- "out incurring also the risk of another war, for "the purpose of guaranteeing the integrity of "the constitution and territory of Poland, a dis- "tant country, with which, through the fault of "the two imperial courts, we have ceased, for a "long time back, to hold any intercourse."

It is very true, that, after having thus conformed to my instructions, I frankly communicated to my court my own sentiments on this subject. "I have "spoken in this manner," I wrote to M. de Montmorin, "merely out of pure obedience; but the

" Russians are in the right, and we are refusing " what we ought to have asked of them. What " is it in reality that they offer to us? the means, " through a powerful league, of keeping our rivals " in check, of preserving our influence at the " Porte, and of reviving it in Holland. I earnestly " request you will weigh the subject well; our " refusal will probably have the effect of leaving us " completely insulated from the rest of Europe, " and of creating a better understanding between " Russia, England and Prussia, the pledge of which " would be found in a fresh partition of Poland. " Peace will be concluded without our mediation; " England will remain in possession of Holland; " in short, we shall lose all consideration and in- " fluence at Constantinople and in Sweden."

The news was becoming more and more satisfactory for the Empress, and alarming for Gustavus. The chiefs of the Finish army, instead of fighting the Russians, sent friendly messages, and even refreshments to the commanders of Catherine's troops; joining afterwards the Swedish army, they kept up, and increased its discontent.

The King of Sweden, on leaving it to return to Stockholm, had confided the command to his brother, the Duke of Sudermania. The latter made some attempts to re-establish military discipline; but all in vain. The rebels told him that he would do better to withdraw, because they had determined to league together against the King, with the view of compelling him to make

peace. They even entertained the idea of fixing limits to his power, which he had abused by deceiving the nation, by unjustly attacking Russia, and by exposing the country to absolute ruin; all, in short, demanded that a cessation of hostilities should be proposed to the Empress, and that she should be solicited for her support.

Whether from dexterity or weakness, the Duke of Sudermania acknowledged his brother's errors, affected an ardent patriotism, and endeavored to prove to the army, that peace was the object nearest to his heart. He then repaired to the camp of the Fins, held the same language to them, and wrote to the Grand Duke Paul, to propose a truce and an interview.

The grand Duke, by withdrawing, avoided the interview; but, in virtue of his orders, Count Poushkin consented to treat. Colonel Montgomery was, in consequence, commissioned by the Swedes, to proceed to Fredericksham, in order to enter into negociations. The Empress, on her part, sent Sprengporten to Finland with secret orders.

It is difficult to understand, why this intelligent and enlightened Princess neglected the most favorable opportunity that fortune could present to her, for terminating the war in a moment, and for firmly establishing her influence, and even her dominion in Sweden.

Her enemy's army was desirous to join her; the public mind was in a state of excitement, as is always the case at the beginning of a revolt;

the soldiers broke out in reproaches against the King, and indulged in the most bitter sarcasms upon his theatrical helmet, on the green feathers with which it was decorated, and on the painter of battles, who was made to accompany him, for the purpose of immortalising his triumph, on the promise, in short, which he had made of taking St. Petersburgh in a week, and of giving balls to the Swedish ladies in that capital.

If Catherine had taken advantage of the moment, the treaty once signed, the rebel army became compromised, and had no longer any door open for repentance. Gustavus would have been compelled to capitulate, and to submit to the restoration of the ancient oligarchy, which a party, as powerful as it was numerous, so ardently called for; but such a resolution could only have been the effect of the treaty, and not the condition of it.

Too much exasperated to form a correct judgment, Catherine missed her aim, by too great an eagerness to gain it. No doubt she offered to consent to an armistice, and even to a peace; but with this express condition, that the army should compel the King to restore the ancient privileges of the nation.

In this manner, negociations and discussions were carrying on, when prompt decision was called for; a sense of patriotism was beginning to work upon the public mind; and Gustavus, availing himself of those delays and uncertainties, soon succeeded, by seasonable acts of firmness,

and by a happy mixture of clemency and severity, in recalling his troops to the path of true honor, in recovering their affection, and in collecting forces sufficiently numerous, to enable him to offer a glorious resistance to his formidable enemy.

If a treaty of peace and alliance was not practicable, a truce at least might have been concluded; the Duke of Sudermania attached no other condition to it, than raising the blockade of the Swedish fleet, which was than shut up in Sweaburg. But the Empress, fearing that this clause was only a cover to some snare, refused her consent to it, in consequence of which, hostilities were continued; and what she denominated an act of prudence, was generally considered as a signal error, which her pride had led her to commit.

The continuation of this war fully answered the views of the Anglo-Prussians; their language only breathed of peace; but ambition dictated all their plans. They offered their mediation every where, and only fomented discord. After having excited it in Holland, at the Porte, and in Sweden, they were then stirring Poland; and the King of Prussia neglected no means of securing early possession of Dantzig.

The four-fold alliance was alone calculated to thwart their intentions; accordingly, threats, insidious offers, rumors artfully spread, every thing was resorted to on their part, in order to obstruct the concluding of a treaty, which would have disconcerted their projects.

This is what I vainly endeavored to instil into the minds of our ministry, by a despatch which I sent to Versailles on the 19th of September. "If we sign the four-fold aliance," I wrote to them, "England and Prussia must shrink "from an encounter with four mighty powers. "Their credit at the Porte will become null; they "will, perhaps, lose their influence in Holland, "and will not dare to attempt any thing in Poland. "In the contrary case, they will deprive us of "our friends, dictate the conditions of peace, and "give Dantzig to Prussia, and fetters to Poland. "As for the Turks, they will be too happy to "obtain, at any price, a cessation of hostilities."

The truth of this observation appeared, at times, to be admitted at Versailles, and some rays of hope, for our political consideration, would again brighten in my sight; but they as rapidly vanished.

On returning home, one night, I learned that an extraordinary courier had arrived, but that, not finding me at home, he had gone away without leaving his despatches. This appeared to me very strange; I asked if he came from France, and my surprise was not lessened, when I was told he had arrived from Kamtschatka. I had already received, a few days back, to my great astonishment, some bills of exchange, drawn upon me by Siberian merchants.

Every thing was cleared up on the following day, when young Lesseps, son of the former French consul at St. Petersburgh, entered my

apartment. He had embarked with M. de la Peyrouse; this illustrious and ill-fated navigator had landed Lesseps, very fortunately for him, on the coast of Kamtschatka, and entrusted him with despatches for France.

This young traveller had just crossed the whole of Asia; he was a year on his way to St. Petersburgh; the excessive rigour of the climate had compelled him to remain three months in the peninsula; and, as he could not find any vessel to carry him across the sea of Ochotsk, he employed three months more in going round the Gulph.

He furnished me with very curious details respecting Kamtschatka and Siberia, and the manners of the inhabitants of those immense solitudes. He has since published an account of this singular voyage, which is written with much clearness of style, and with an easy frankness, that justly entitles it to confidence.

M. de la Peyrouse made it a request to me that I should obtain, from the Empress, some signal mark of favor for M. de Kosloff, the Governor of Kamtschatka. This Governor had given the French the most friendly reception, and would not even receive payment for the bullocks sent to the French crew. M. de Lesseps, moreover, had received, throughout the Empire, every kind of assistance and escorts, as well as money, which, agreeably to the request of M. de la Peyrouse, I hastened to reimburse.

Young Lesseps was zealous, ardent, and inde-

fatigable; he would take no rest at St. Petersburgh, but, anxious to execute the orders he had received, he requested I would entrust him with my despatches for Versailles; I consented. He is, perhaps, the only European who has traversed, in a direct line, from East to West, the whole of Asia and of Europe.

About the same time, M. Begouen, a French merchant, a man distinguished for his virtues, knowledge, and prudent conduct, in the different situations he has filled, gave me a very important statement, which I had requested him to prepare, respecting the commerce of the North. I forwarded it to M. de la Luzerne, and to M. Necker.

It contained important truths, which cannot be too often repeated: "We are in error when we "consider commercial views as of subordinate "importance in politics, whilst the English direct "their principal attention to them; in this re- "spect, they carry on a perpetual war against us, "which no peace ever interrupts; that war, un- "der proper direction, forms the source of their "wealth, and the basis of their credit; it procures "them the mournful advantage of checking our "industry, of paralysing our navigation, and of "sustaining their preponderating influence in the "North, by means of their prodigious exporta- "tions, which create constant employment for "able seamen, who are thus trained to fight us, "with every prospect of success."

At this period, I received orders from my court;

Gustavus had urged its friendly interference. I was directed to solicit of the Empress, to accept it; a mission which was not unattended with difficulty; for, at this time, the King of Sweden, shewing little sincerity towards Louis XVI, had also requested the mediation of Prussia, of England, and of Holland, whose ministers, accordingly, offered to the Empress to become mediators between her and the Swedes and Turks. But Catherine, persuaded that those three cabinets only spoke of peace, with a view to protract the war, did not accept their mediation.

This Princess was, then, too well informed of their manœuvres to be deceived by their artifices. The Chevalier Altesti, attached to the legation of M. de Bulgakoff, and very devoted to this minister, had arrived from Constantinople in the month of May, of the same year, 1788; he brought me a letter from M. de Choiseul; as he found himself without any protection at St. Petersburgh, he had applied to me, in the utmost confidence, as to a person whom he supposed to possess, by his situation, the means of knowing the court of Russia, and those whose credit was most influential; I gave him advices which, afterwards, proved of utility to him.

This young man, who belonged to a good family in Ragusa, the people of which, by the conformity of language, and the tradition of a common origin, consider Russia as their mother country, had been brought into the service by M. de Bulgakoff, who presented him to the Empress, on the occa-

sion of her passing through Kherson. When he arrived at St. Petersburgh, the minister ordered him to draw up a statement that might give the Empress a correct idea of his talents. He had already made one, on the subject of certain ports in Italy, where the Russian fleet might safely take shelter.

But, as he had often spoken to me of the English and Prussian intrigues at Constantinople, and especially of those carried on by Chevalier Ainsley, with which he seemed better acquainted than with any others, I told him that, in order to afford a more correct idea of his knowledge and talents, he would do better to furnish an exact account of all that had occurred at Constantinople, in his time, and of the means employed, for deciding the Porte to so unforeseen a rupture.

He followed my advice, and shewed me shortly afterwards, his statement, which I found to be drawn up with strength, intelligence, and clearness; it displayed the warm feelings of a man separated from his protector, by Messieurs Dietz and Ainsley, who would have willingly sent him to the Seven Towers.

If M. de Choiseul had directed this statement, he could not have represented, in a more favorable light, the dignified conduct of France, and the duplicity of the English and Prussians.

The minister delivered this statement to Catherine. I have always thought that this faithful and candid recital had contributed, more than any thing else, in putting Catherine upon her guard

against the false accounts and artful insinuations which England and Prussia were constantly spreading, under every possible form.

M. Alvensleben, however, who was subsequently attached to the Russian legation in Poland, succeeded so well in conciliating the good will of his Sovereign, who was so just an appreciator of talents, that she admitted him into her private intimacy, gave him the care to draw up many important reports, relative to the affairs of Turkey and Persia, and intended, at the time of her death, to raise him to a distinguished place in the public administration.

Wishing to defeat the projects of Frederick William, this Princess proposed to the Poles, that they should join her in a defensive alliance; their passions, and the intrigues of Prussia, prevented them from acceding to this offer. They might have found their safety in such an alliance; but the book of fate had probably recorded their downfall.

At the moment when the English and Prussians were renewing their endeavors to conciliate the Empress, M. de Choiseul, by a fortunate chance, transmitted to me a very hostile note, addressed to the Porte, by the ministers of England and Prussia. I communicated it to the Russian cabinet; and Catherine was so much exasperated on perusing it, that she gave reason to hope for all the compensations called for by my court, provided we would sign the treaty of alliance.

If I had, at this moment, received my full powers,

all might have been concluded: but fortune has wings, and of late we avoided all opportunities of impeding her flight.

The Empress, whose resentment against the King of Sweden was far from having cooled, spoke to me with bitterness, of the inconsistencies she discovered in every part of that Prince's conduct. "Instead," she said, "of prescribing mo-
"deration to me, by a sincere course of acting,
"to which I could not but yield, whilst he is
"speaking of peace, and solicits your mediation,
"he continues to publish insulting declarations
"against me, and endeavors to give extension to
"the war, by drawing England and Prussia to his
"side."

"You are aware," she added, "how this new
"Anglo-Prussian league is artfully and boldly
"contrived; how it seeks to undermine your in-
"fluence, and my own, in every direction; what
"a dictatorial and imposing tone it assumes, in
"the alleged defensive treaty it has just con-
"cluded. It would be an object of the utmost
"urgency to defeat its views, by a union and con-
"cert, which would baffle all ambitious projects
"and preserve the peace of Europe. I hope,"
she concluded, "that you will make a prudent
"and discreet use of what I have just said to
"you in full confidence."

"The King, Madam," I replied, "is, certainly,
"well disposed to come to an understanding with
"your Majesty, upon every point. A perfect
"concert appears, to me, more desirable than ever.

" The unforeseen proceedings of the King of " Sweden, towards England and Prussia, have " filled me with astonishment. I can hardly be- " lieve, however, considering the gloomy state of " this Prince's affairs, that he can form the in- " tention of protracting the war; perhaps, even, it " is owing to the extreme embarrassment in " which he is plunged, that he has applied to " every one at once, in order to obtain peace."

" No;" rejoined the Empress, " he wishes to " bring about disorder, and not peace; for he offers " nothing, neither speaks of satisfaction nor of " indemnity. Whilst he, vaguely, applies to every " court, he continues to offer personal offence to " me, by a recently published declaration, to " which he, in bad faith, affixes an old date; " though he only distributed it at the end of " August, which is the very moment, when he " pretended to your court that he was anxious " for peace."

The Princess did not conceal from my knowledge, the new course resorted to, for the purpose of instilling mistrust into her mind against us. She had been told, that our cabinet had lately thrown out, in England, certain hints, for the purpose of inducing that power to come to an understanding with it, not to allow the King of Sweden to be overwhelmed by Russia.

I treated this report as a story, invented in London or at Berlin. It was not to be supposed, in fact, that the French ministry would apply to its natural enemies, to act against the court of St.

Petersburgh, at a moment when the latter expressed its readiness to form engagements with us against England, and when the Anglo-Prussian league was adding aggravation, by a new treaty, to the wound already inflicted upon us in Holland; and never relaxed in her intention, of destroying our influence throughout Europe.

Catherine, in hopes of receiving some satisfactory information on this subject, ordered her minister to despatch a courier to M. de Simolin, recommending him to accelerate the negociation relative to the four-fold alliance, and to remove every difficulty, by acquainting the King, that she was ready to satisfy him, by every desirable compensation.

I also wrote to M. de Montmorin, in the most urgent terms: "The danger presses upon us," I said to him; "either we shall resume our "preponderating influence at Madrid, Vienna, "Stockholm, Warsaw, Naples, the Porte, St. "Petersburgh, Copenhagen, and in Holland, or "see the imperial courts draw nearer to Eng- "land and Prussia; and Poland will shortly be "partitioned. If the peace with England should "be interrupted, we shall remain deprived of all "assistance against her, and be no longer reck- "oned as of any weight in Europe.

"These are the real facts, opposed to the pi- "tiful arguments of those pretended politicians, "who will always fancy themselves at the period "of the treaty of Westphalia, forgetting that "Prussia and Russia were not then in exist-

" ence, that the house of Austria was a colos-
" sus, and that it was indispensible for France,
" Sweden, and Turkey to unite their efforts, and
" prevent that gigantic power from crushing what-
" ever stood in its way.

" At present every thing is altered: it is the
" ambition of Prussia, England and Holland that
" threatens us. You wanted to raise a barrier
" against it: what then can detain you, at the
" moment when all your wishes are complied
" with? Possibly, the Anglo-Prussians, relying
" upon the embarrassments which our internal
" disturbances are occasioning, hope to alarm
" you, by giving you to apprehend a general war,
" as the unavoidable effect of the projected four-
" fold alliance; they deceive you, and are in dread
" of this alliance, because it is alone calculated
" to disconcert them, and would render it impos-
" sible for them to make war. Let us show our-
" selves prepared for battle, and we shall pre-
" serve the peace undisturbed."

M. de Galvez, the new Spanish minister, arrived at St. Petersburgh; he was coldly received, though without any just reason, and merely because he was suspected of being too partial to the Prussian government, which had imposed upon his good faith, by the most pacific language.

The Spanish ministry had fallen into the same error; and the King, Charles III, far from sharing our uneasiness, trusted so much in the protestations of England and Prussia, that it was, he

said, quite equal to him, whether Russia accepted their mediation or his own, so that a general peace was the result.

At this time, the Empress suffered a loss which caused her a just sorrow; Admiral Greig died; distinguished as a chief by his activity, as an administrator by his enlightened judgment, as an admiral by his talents, as a warrior by his courage and his modesty, he carried with him, to the grave, the esteem of his enemies, and the regret of all who had been acquainted with him.

The Empress had yet to encounter fresh disappointments; the King of Sweden was again emboldened by the hopes of assistance, given to him by England and Prussia. The Swedish and Finish armies began to manifest the desire, of obtaining the forgiveness of their revolt. The fermentation of the public mind was increasing in Poland; the evacuation of the Polish territory, by the Russians, was loudly called for; this would have left the army of Marshal Romanzoff without any secure retreat, in case he suffered any reverses. The armies of the Emperor had just experienced a check in the Bannate.

All these circumstances made Catherine desirous of a prompt, honorable and moderate peace; to this end she formally accepted the mediation of Spain and of France; thus, in spite of our rivals, and of the inaction of our cabinet, chance favored me so well, that I obtained, on this important point, all the success which my court could have wished for.

In the meanwhile, Mr. Whitworth, the new minister of England, arrived at St. Petersburgh; he was a diplomatic character of great merit, but his presence gave us much less uneasiness than Mr. Fitz-Herbert could have done. We likewise expected M. de Luchesini, the envoy from the King of Prussia, a clever, active, witty minister, a cotemporary of Frederick the Great, of whom he related, with much humor, a variety of anecdotes and spirited traits.

The Empress, who disliked his turbulent disposition, seemed little disposed to receive him; she was wrong; he could not, in any manner, have been dangerous to Russia: he remained in Poland, greatly incensed against the Russian government: and his intrigues, which found the Poles well disposed to vent their long suppressed hatred, had the effect of inflaming the passions, and of quickly operating a revolution.

These unfortunate Poles, too eager to shake off the yoke of Russia, caught fire at the first spark of a hope of liberty, and began with a measure, by which they ought to have ended. They should have formed an army, previously to making a parade of their independence.

The Empress was beginning to fear that her troops, weakened by sickness, would be compelled to raise the siege of Oczakoff, as they had only taken the island, the Fort of Beresan, and four hundred Turks.

Prince Potemkin appeared to relapse into his habitual lethargy; when a courier arrived on a sud-

den, whom he had despatched with the intelligence of his having just taken Oczakoff by assault. He had long hesitated; the works were not far advanced; the Captain-Pacha, previous to his sailing away, had thrown five hundred men into the town; but, on the day of the festival of St. Nicholas, the grenadiers assemble, murmur, break out in complaints, surround the Prince's tent, and seditiously call for the assault.

The General availed himself of this circumstance, which added to the courage of the Russian soldiery, the ardor of fanaticism. He gave the signal for battle. The town was attacked and defended with obstinacy. The Russians, ten times repulsed, returned to the charge with fury, crossed the ditches over the heaped up bodies of the Mussulmans, and scaled the ramparts.

The rage of fanaticism, on both sides, inundated the city with blood; neither sex nor age was spared. A troop of savage Zaporavians, who had entered into the service of Catherine, mounted to the assault with white sheets over their armour; "They wished," they said, "to excite one another "to vengeance, by the sight of their blood-stained "garments."

Seven thousand Turks perished in this carnage, and four thousand were taken prisoners. The violence of the soldiers was such, that two days after the assault, when they found Turkish children concealed in some of the intrenchments, and in places under ground, they threw them up into the air, and received them on the points of

their bayonets, crying out: "These, at least, shall "do no harm to christians." This fact was related to me by the excellent Prince d'Anhalt, who, in mentioning it, still shuddered with horror.

The joy of this triumph was the greater, because it had almost ceased to be hoped for. The rewards were numerous: our French volunteers received the Cross of St. George, which I authorised them to wear.

Thus, in spite of the delays of Potemkin, the misunderstandings of the Generals, the Swedish diversion, and the Emperor's defective plan of campaign, the year 1788 terminated very fortunately, for the two imperial courts, to the great displeasure of the cabinets of London and Berlin.

The Turks had been beaten at Kilbourn, and repulsed in the Crimea; the Captain-Pacha had been thrice vanquished, and his fleet was destroyed. The Porte had lost Oczakoff with the adjacent territory, the island of Beresan, Choczim and Moldavia; the Mussulmans had evacuated Wallachia; the Tartars of Kuban were dispersed; the Austrians having taken Dubitza, Sabatch and Novi, had just caused the Bannate to be evacuated; the King of Sweden was driven out of Russian Finland, and his naval force was blockaded at Sweaburg. Such were the fruits which the Porte and Sweden had derived, from the Anglo-Prussian advice which they had preferred to ours.

In laying before M. de Montmorin this short description of the state of affairs, I addressed to him, in a private letter, my congratulations on the

retirement of the Archbishop of Sens, whose dismissal would leave him at liberty to promote the negociation of the quadruple alliance, with greater activity and success.

In the beginning of the year 1789, which was to produce so great a change in France, and for a time to separate our cabinet from those of the rest of Europe, the approaching shock was not foreseen by any of them. The lightnings which were the forerunners of the storm, had indeed been seen many months before; but no one foresaw what was to follow. It was believed that salutary reforms would put an end to the temporary difficulties of the government.

It was a period of illusions; the King, his ministers, the parliaments, the three orders of the state, all Frenchmen in short, animated by a desire for the public good, seemed absorbed in deceitful dreams. All hoped, by one common effort, to strengthen the foundations of the monarchy, to re-establish its finances, to revive its credit, to harmonize its decaying institutions, to efface the traces of servitude, and, by a combination of protecting power and well-regulated freedom, to attain in a short time that noblest of all ends, the good of their country. Such, at least, was the impression produced on foreign powers by the virtues of the King and the generous sentiments of the French nation.

Thus, our troubles alarmed no one. Our friends regarded them as transitory; our rivals, the English and the Prussians, wished to take advantage

of them, in order to consolidate their dominion in Holland, and to increase their influence in the North and in the Levant, at the expence of ours; but our political rank was not reduced, and had been but slightly affected by the tergiversations of our ministers.

Still entertaining, then, some hope that my government would combine to sustain the honorable part of mediator between Russia and her enemies, I availed myself of the taking of Oczakoff, to make overtures for peace to the Russian ministry. They were well received; but the Empress, as a preliminary condition, and before deliberating on the others, required the liberation of M. de Bulgakoff.

She always maintained, that the readiest way to put an end to the war, and to counteract the Anglo-Prussian intrigues, was to consolidate our force, by concluding the projected alliance. Her desire to form this compact had become so strong, that she now offered us, in case of a war with England, not a mere neutrality, but effective aid; and, finally, ceasing to ask for a guarantee of the Polish constitution, she contented herself with requiring that of the Polish territory.

This was much more than I could have hoped for; and, therefore, I was strangely surprised when, instead of being authorized to accede to these proposals, I was ordered to make some attempt to obtain, from the two imperial courts, the revocation of the first partition of Poland.

I spoke about it, however, to the Count de

Cobentzel, who was not only more astonished than I was, but urged me not to take such a step, the unavoidable effect of which would be to irritate the Empress and drive her into the arms of England.

It was quite enough to succeed in dissuading Catherine from making new conquests from her neighbours, without engaging in the chimerical project of making her give up those of which she was already in possession. I confined myself, therefore, to this first communication; and, as it was likely to be known to the Russian ministry, I thought I had sufficiently obeyed the extraordinary order which I had received.

On every other point, the Count de Cobentzel seconded me with activity; for the Emperor, ill in health, and discouraged by his reverses in the Bannate, warmly desired a speedy peace. Prince Potemkin also wished for it; and I learned from M. de Nassau, who had just then returned from the army, that the Prince, beginning to view us as feeble and uncertain supporters, shewed a disposition to change his system, and to recommend to his Sovereign a connection with England and Prussia, as being more formidable enemies and more useful friends.

The coldness of Spain, with regard to the fourfold alliance, could not but strengthen him in this disposition. These unfavorable circumstances left me no resource, but in the firmness of the Empress's character; she always shewed herself so hostile to the King of Prussia, that she repelled

every proposal which tended, even indirectly, to a connection with him.

The court of Versailles was surprised at the taking of Oczakoff, and this intelligence changed the views of our ministry. They became anxious to know to what limits Catherine would confine her ambition. In order to obtain information on this point, I asked Count Bezborodko, as an idea occurring to myself, whether the Empress would be satisfied, if the Porte would give up M. de Bulgakoff, confirm the final cession of the Crimea to Russia, and add to it that of Oczakoff.

A few days afterwards, the Empress caused me to be informed that I had guessed her intentions; at the same time, she intimated to me, that she was about to despatch M. de Nassau to Madrid. The pretence for his journey, was to be his desire to congratulate Charles the Fourth, who had formerly heaped many favors upon him, on his accession to the throne; but the real object, was the execution of the secret instruction which Catherine confided to him.

She charged him to lay before that Monarch, her just complaints against Prussia and England, to inform the Spanish ministry of the positive discovery which she had just made of the designs of Frederick William upon Dantzic and Poland, and, generally, to impress upon him the necessity of a fourfold alliance, to preserve the peace of Europe.

The Empress hoped, thereby to remove the strongest grounds for the hesitation of our cabi-

net; she attributed our delays, to the deference which Louis XVI paid to the King of Spain. "I "see," she said to the Prince de Nassau, "that it "is at Madrid that this great question will be de- "cided, on which depends, perhaps, the fate of "the House of Bourbon in Europe."

In compliance with the request of the Prince de Nassau, I gave him a summary of the course of political conduct pursued by England for some years, in order to revenge herself for the loss of America, by attacking, every where, the influence of the courts of Madrid and Versailles, and by endeavoring, in concert with Prussia and Holland, to renew the war, in which their chances of success would be increased by our internal troubles. I had drawn up this paper with great care; it was intended to be read by the King of Spain, M. de Florida Blanca his Prime Minister, and M. de Montmorin.

At this moment, the storm seemed about to burst forth, which we were seeking to avoid. The Empress suddenly learned the success of the intrigues of M. de Luchesini. The Poles, excited by this minister, and reckoning on the support of the King of Prussia, had just abolished the permanent council, and overturned the Polish constitution which Catherine had guaranteed; at the same time, they loudly demanded the evacuation of their country by the Russian troops.

The Empress, irritated, wished at first to employ force, in support of the constitution imposed by her; and it was with difficulty that M. de

Cobentzel, M. de Nassau, and myself, succeeded in allaying this first impulse of anger. We represented to her, that the King of Prussia would take advantage of so hasty a measure, to promote his ambitious projects; that he would enter Poland, that the whole Polish nation would rush into the field, and that this diversion would favor the arms of Sweden and of the Porte.

Catherine yielded, took up a tone of moderation, and, in order to dispel the false alarms circulated in Poland, by the Prussians, affected great indifference with regard to the changes made in the Polish constitution. She persisted, however, in keeping her troops in the Ukraine, in order not to endanger the army of Marshal Romanzoff.

In the midst of these transactions, Prince Potemkin returned to St. Petersburgh. The taking of Oczakoff seemed to have made the Empress forget the just and numerous reasons she had for being displeased with him; satisfied with his triumph, she forgave his indolence. All those who had most murmured against his negligence, were now the most eager to pay him a slavish homage.

He had been told, that I was amongst the number of his detractors, and he complained of it to me when he saw me. "The word *detractor*," I replied, "is too strong; what has been said to "you, however, is not entirely without foundation. "I had some difficulty in understanding, to what "cause your imprudent confidence was owing in

" removing all the troops from the North of the " Empire, which the King of Sweden would have " found open to him, had he been bolder and more " rapid in his measures. It appeared to me, also, " that you had left the Turks plenty of time to put " Oczakoff into a state of defence, it being a place " which the engineer Lafitte regarded as incapable " of resisting a vigorous attack; and in this respect, " your friends, the Prince de Ligne and Nassau, " shared in my opinion and impatience."

" I have nothing to say," replied the Prince, " with respect to the King of Sweden, except " that no reasonable man could foresee a war " without a cause, and a rashness like that of " Gustavus the Third. But, as to Oczakoff, you " are mistaken; nothing announced an act of " aggression on the part of the Turks; they, on " the contrary, apprehended it from us. I was " obliged to distribute my troops over a line of " five hundred leagues, and to send a multitude " of carriages, loaded with provisions and ammu- " nition, across deserts. I think that, in a short " time, I did all that could be done."

" It is now my turn," I said laughing, " to ac- " cuse you; I know, from pretty good authority, " that you have become very indifferent about " our four-fold alliance, to which you appeared " to attach so much importance. It is even as- " serted that, forgetting all the intrigues of Eng- " land and Prussia against you, you are disposed " to approximate to them, to plead their cause

" with the Empress, and, in a word, that you are " ready to hold out your hand to your enemies, " and turn your back upon your friends."

" And why not?" he rejoined in the same tone, " should a diplomatist, like you, be astonished at " that. I confess that, when I saw the kingdom " of France become an Archbishoprick, and a Pre- " late sending away two Marshals from the coun- " cil, and allowing the English and Prussians to " wrest Holland from you, without striking a blow, " I did venture to indulge in a joke; and said that " I would have advised my sovereign to form an " alliance with Louis the Corpulent, with Louis " the Young, with Saint Louis, with the clever " Louis the Twelfth, with Louis the Great, even " with Louis the Well-Beloved, but not with " *Louis the Suffragan.*

" It is true," I replied, laughing, " that kings " have sometimes appointed bishops and cardi- " nals their ministers; but I do not believe that " they ever raised a general to the ministry, who " had often shown a desire to become a monk."

This epigrammatic conversation, of which I did not think it necessary to give any account to my court, ended, as it had begun, in a gay and friendly manner.

But it is certain, that the Prince no longer relying on our strength, had really changed his system. From this time, therefore, though he remained on the same footing of general intimacy with me, as before, he shewed me no more political

confidence; and on the contrary, became, openly enough, more closely connected with the ministers of England and Prussia.

One day, when there was a large party at his house, his displeasure against France, induced him to play off a very awkward joke against me; which, however, did not turn out much to his advantage.

In former times there were, throughout Europe, in all the courts, and in the houses of all the grandees, a class of fools, whose good fortune, ambition might have envied. They had the rare privilege of speaking the truth with impunity. The dangerous nature of such a power, has probably put an end to the fashion.

There were still some noblemen in Russia who kept favorite buffoons of this class. Prince Potemkin had one named Mosse; he was droll, and not ill-formed; and in the midst of his jests, remarks frequently escaped him, which were no less caustic than they were daring.

The Prince was playing at chess with me, in the presence of several officers, and a considerable number of personages of the court. Wishing to embarrass me, by way of amusing himself, he called his fool, and said to him; "I should like to "know what you think of the news that we have "received from Paris. They are about to con-"voke the States-General of the Kingdom; tell "me, what will be the consequence?"

Mosse, without further solicitation, talked and declaimed for a quarter of an hour, with extreme

volubility, pouring forth his undigested and comical erudition, confounding facts, reigns, dates, the Albigenses, the Protestants and the Jansenists; but still intermingling true anecdotes, and presenting, on the whole, a grotesque and satirical caricature of our court, our clergy, our nobility and our national character. The conclusion of all these epigrams was, a prediction of a general disturbance and universal absurdity, unless wise men, like himself, were placed at the head of affairs, instead of the fools who now conducted them.

During this fine display against France, the guests were watching me, and enjoying the joke; and the Prince was laughing in his sleeve at the troublesome position into which he had put me by making me listen to so much abuse of my country, and giving me a fool for an antagonist.

However, I did not lose my presence of mind, and I resolved to have my revenge. I was not ignorant how far people were forced, at St. Petersburgh, to be silent and circumspect with regard to politics and the operations of the government. These subjects, in fact, were not allowed to be talked of.

Instead of being angry with the orator, I said to him: "My dear Mosse, you are a learned "man; but you have not seen France for twenty "years, and your memory, although prodigious, "deceives you in some points; what you have "delivered is a rude mixture of truth and error. "Your able discourse, however, convinces me

" that you would be much more eloquent and " interesting if you would speak to us of Rus- " sia, and of the war in which she is at present " engaged against Turkey."

On hearing this, Prince Potemkin frowned, and made a threatening gesture to the fool; but the intrepid Mosse, who was in the right humor, and whom my praises had encouraged, started off with fury, and treated Russia even more unmercifully than France. He expatiated on the miserable slavery of the people, on the despotism of the court, on the imperfect state of the army, on the emptiness of the treasury, on the bank's want of credit. " What, in short," said he, " is " to be thought of a government, whose affairs " are in this wretched state, and which is, never- " theless, about to waste the lives of so many " men, and so much money, in order to conquer " deserts and catch the plague? Why do they " resolve to ruin themselves, to bleed through " every pore and run the risk of arming all " Europe against them? You cannot guess why. " I will tell you. It is all to amuse a great Prince, " now present, who finds time hanging heavy on " his hands, and to give him the pleasure of add- " ing the ribbon of St. George to the thirty or " forty decorations with which he is already " bespangled."

At this palpable hit, I burst out into a hearty laugh; the rest of the company, with great difficulty, suppressed their inclination to follow my example, and the Prince, in a rage, overturned the

table, and put Mosse to flight by throwing the chess-board at his head. I then represented to the Prince, that we should appear more foolish than Mosse, if we allowed ourselves to be put in a passion by his folly; and the evening ended in mirth.

I had too fully explained, in my despatches, the disadvantages of uncertainty, for any further delay to take place in the adoption of some decided step. M. de Montmorin appeared to have made up his mind to it. "You have completely "informed us," he wrote to me, "of the dispo- "sition of the Empress with regard to the pro- "jected alliance, so that nothing now remains but "to form a definitive plan on all points. This has "been prepared, and it has been, for some days, "in the hands of the King. I will, without delay "despatch a courier to you, with the last orders "of his Majesty. Let Russia know that Holland "is about to arm a squadron to join the Swe- "dish fleet; we have secret advices of this."

This despatch gave the Russian ministry, Count Cobentzel and myself one more ray of hope; but it was the last.

The Empress exhibited much ill-humour with us. She knew that we had consented to pay the King of Sweden some arrears of subsidies, and was astonished at our silence and at that of Spain respecting Prussia, "which we ought," she said, "to have restrained and intimidated, by "threatening her with the power of our arms, if "she continued to put Europe in danger by her

"schemes of aggrandizement in Poland." She believed, too, that we might have held a firmer language to the Porte, in order to accelerate a peace. Hence, it may be seen how little our internal situation and the embarrassments of our government were known in Russia.

Sweden, at this time, began to give serious uneasiness to Catherine. It had been hoped that a new diet would be animated by the spirit of discontent which had just broken out in the Swedish army. Besides, Gustavus attacked by the troops of the King of Denmark, which had already landed in the Swedish territory, could with difficulty resist this new enemy. Thus, every thing seemed to combine to force him to lay down his arms, and subscribe to the terms which neighboring powers and his own subjects might prescribe to him.

But it turned out quite otherwise. The King of Sweden found, in his talents and courage, resources proportioned to the greatness of the perils which threatened him. Already Prince Charles of Hesse, General of the Danish army, having entered Sweden by Norway, had surprised a post of eight hundred men; he had made himself master in fifteen days of all the country situated between Amal and Wenersborg, and was advancing towards Gottenburg.

Gustavus had, then, with him only two thousand men, who were necessary for the defence of Stockholm. The Danes met with no other opposition, than what some feeble bodies of citizens,

recently organized, were able to offer. The King lived in solitude at Haga; he was urged to convoke a diet at that place. There was, in Stockholm, a powerful party, which seconded the intrigues of the revolted armies of Finland.

At this critical moment, Gustavus the Third remembered that Gustavus Vasa had found an asylum in the mines and caverns of Dalecarlia, whence he soon afterwards went forth, to deliver Sweden from its enemies. The King, with a happy resolution, imitated this grand example; he set off immediately for Mora, the most populous parish in that country. He was received there with transports of joy; he convoked the Dalecarlians in an open plain, attended divine service with them, and standing on the very stone from which Gustavus Vasa had addressed the same people, he harangued them in noble, heroic and spirit-stirring language. All who heard him, appeared as if electrified by his eloquence; all took the oath of fidelity to him; all seized their arms to march against the enemy.

In the other parts of this country, which he rapidly went through, he found the same zeal and the same loyalty; and thus this Monarch, pressed upon by powerful neighbours, and abandoned by rebellious troops, sought and found assistance, and a last resource, amongst brave and simple peasants.

The Dalecarlians wished to raise for him a guard of six thousand young volunteers. "Whilst "I am in the midst of you," said the King, "I

" shall want no guard; but I accept your offers " to fly to the aid of your country."

The neighboring provinces imitated the example of Dalecarlia. On all sides they armed and organized themselves. But, just at this time, Gustavus learned that the Duke Charles of Hesse expected to obtain immediate possession of Gottenburg, because the governor of the town, intimidated or seduced, had proposed to the inhabitants to capitulate on the first summons, in order to avoid the misfortune of having their houses reduced to ashes.

Gustavus, instantly, undaunted by the danger of being taken by the enemy, put on a disguise, rode twenty miles alone, on horseback, the same day, entered Gottenburg in the evening, and went to the house of the governor, to enjoy a few moments of repose. He found the house empty, without bed and without furniture; the prudent governor had already placed all his effects in safety.

At day-break, the King convoked the town council, and all the citizens. " Do not fear," he said to them, " either the enemy or the attack. " Assist my exertions and I will conquer with " you. I would sacrifice my life a hundred times " to preserve Gottenburg, the richest jewel in " my crown."

These words, and his example, emboldened the most timid. All the horses and arms were collected, and the labor at the fortifications were incessant; there were neither batteries nor ram-

parts; these were constructed, and cannons placed upon them; in a few days, in short, the place was in a state of defence.

The Danish army now arrived under the walls, and the Aide-de-camp of the Prince de Hesse, charged by him with a threatening message for the governor, was introduced; to his great surprise, instead of the governor he met the King, who declared to him, "that rather than surrender "the city, he would see it reduced to a heap of "ruins." It was now evident that the Danes, instead of surprising an undefended country, would have to sustain an obstinate warfare.

In the mean while, the Danish fleet joined the Russian; on all sides, both by land and by sea, Gustavus was menaced, attacked, and endangered by superior forces. His ruin seemed unavoidable. He only hoped to preserve his glory, and to be buried with his faithful Dalecarlians beneath the ruins of his country. His firmness proved his salvation.

Weak Princes are despised and abandoned, while courageous ones claim admiration and support; England and Prussia would not suffer the enemies of Gustavus to overwhelm him. They demanded of Denmark the recall of her troops; and the English minister, Elliot, declared to the Danish government, that, if they did not evacuate Sweden, an English fleet should bombard Copenhagen.

An armistice was forthwith concluded, during which the feeble garrison of Gottenburg received

a reinforcement of six thousand men. The Dalecarlians were remarked amongst them, armed with reaping-hooks, arquebuses, and halberds; they wore a black jacket, and had a white linen band tied round their right arms. They were formed into three regiments.

The armistice was prolonged; the Danes retired; a negociation followed, and Denmark concluded a peace. Thus, Gustavus had one enemy less; but he was still exposed to two, who were formidable; the Russians abroad, and the aristocratical party at home.

The rebel army was always in a state of truce with the Russians. The insurgent officers, together with the Empress, with whom they acted, hoped that the diet would compel the King to sue for peace, and to change the form of his government.

But Gustavus very soon dispelled those chimerical expectations; he suddenly re-appeared in his capital, and the people received him with triumph. That Prince was resolved to venture a decisive blow, in order to crush his most dangerous enemies.

Immediately, while he was still at Gottenburg, he convoked the diet, and it again met in the capital. The King appeared there, assembled the four orders in full court, laid before them the situation of Sweden, and its relations with the powers of Europe; and declared that, with them, he wished for peace, but for an honorable peace, and that he knew of only one way of obtaining it—which was, to prosecute the war with energy; fi-

nally, he recommended the four orders to elect a secret committee, of thirty members, with whom he might deliberate on the interests of the country.

The clergy, the peasantry, and the greater part of the middling classes declared, openly, for the King, and for a continuation of the war, and they were unanimous in the choice of their deputies.

The nobility, alone, endeavored to multiply the difficulties, prolong the delays, and counteract every measure resolved upon; by their conduct they irritated the three other orders, and wearied the patience of Gustavus.

That Monarch had prepared every thing for a political manœuvre. Disciplined and practised troops were ready to enter Stockholm on the slightest signal. The King convened all the members of the diet, in the grand hall of his palace. He publicly thanked the three orders, consisting of the clergy, the middle class, and the peasantry, for their affection towards him, for the zeal with which they had supported him, and for their devotion to their country. "But you, "knights and serviles," said he, "you, who "ought, by your example, to inspirit others, are "deaf to the voice of your country; you listen "only to that of your passions."

After having prolonged this sharp harangue against his adversaries, he thus concluded his address, speaking to the whole diet: "I can- "not, and I ought not, to consent that the no- "bles, by perpetual delays, should favor the pro-

"jects of the enemy. "It is necessary that I "should be at once assisted; that our forces, both "by land and sea, be clothed, armed, and paid; "otherwise, and I make this declaration before-"hand, if our shores are ravaged, if Finland is "devastated by fire and sword, if ever this capital "is exposed to the attacks of the enemy, no cen-"sure can attach to me.

"Those only will be culpable who, sooner than "renounce their ambition to govern the kingdom, "and forego their projects of vengeance against "me, will consent to see the foreigner at Stock-"holm, and a Russian minister dictating impe-"rious laws to me. They hope that, by mul-"tiplying the obstacles and the delays, they will "force me to conclude a dishonorable peace; but "this hand shall wither, before it shall sign a "compact humiliating to my country. I had "much rather, that they should strike off my "head, and crush this coronet," which was that of Gustavus Adolphus, "upon my brow; for, if "I cannot wear it with the same fame that he "did, I will, at least, leave it without a stain to "my successors."

He immediately broke up the sitting, after having commanded the order of the nobility to deliberate on the reparation which the Grand Marshal required, for an offence of which he had complained.

The greater the attachment displayed by the three other orders towards the King, the stronger became the resentment and the opposition of the

nobles. The middle class, and the peasants, sent a deputation to the King, and entreated him to employ all the means, which he deemed necessary, to put the diet, at length, into a state of efficiency. That was what Gustavus wished for.

Certain, then, of a majority of suffrages, he had thirty of the principal speakers, among the nobility, arrested by his guard, and conducted to the state prisons of Friddrichschoff. At the same time, he seized the commanders and officers of the army in Finland, who had negociated with Russia, and brought them before a council of war.

Gustavus, profiting by the success of this exercise of authority, in order to extend his power, drew up, in conjunction with the three orders, a new constitutional act, which he named *the act of union and safety*. His end was two-fold; to strengthen the royal authority, and to weaken the nobility, by abolishing the greater part of their privileges: he thus established, in a monarchy, a democratic equality, to prevent the return of an aristocratic tyranny.

A single passage, from his address, will suffice, to explain his intention perfectly. " A people " equally free," said he, " born in one and the " same country, cultivating one and the same " soil, bound by the same laws, acknowledging " one and the same God, ought not to be di- " vided in opinions upon the rights which all " the citizens appear equally authorised to lay " claim to."

The first article of this act *acknowledged the he-*

reditary power of the King, with the right of watching over the safety of the kingdom, of declaring war, of making peace, of concluding treaties, of naming public functionaries, and of granting pardon.

Article 2, *admitted the middle-class into the supreme tribunal of the King.*

Article 3, *permitted commoners to purchase the estates of nobles;* " For, (these are the words of " the act), equality, in the eyes of the Swedes, " should always exalt and not debase feelings: a " nation equally free, ought to have equal rights."

Article 4, *assigned to the equestrian order, exclusively, the charges of the court.*

Articles 5 and 6, *left to the states the discussion of subsidies, and the royal propositions.*

The other articles *confirmed all the provisions of* 1772, *which were, in no way, contrary to the present act.*

This act became the object of deliberation in the diet. The nobility, alone, refused to accept it. After three weeks of sharp debate and thirty-three violent opposition speeches, it was unanimously rejected by the order of the nobility.

As a last resource, the King declared that the Marshal of the States, Count de Lowenhaupt, was not only authorised, but even obliged to sign, in the name of the diet and of his order, the constitutional act passed by a majority of the members of the state; the Marshal obeyed. The nobility protested, and even had recourse to the King of Prussia, to obtain some modifications through his support.

At length, the King decided on an extreme measure. On the 27th of April, 1788, he went, wholly unaccompanied, either by attendants or guards, to the meeting of the equestrian order. His appearance quickly disconcerted the boldest of the members, and the others were drawn into submission, by a touching and powerful address from Gustavus, upon the urgency of the circumstances, and the peril to which the country was exposed. Finally, the order of the nobility gave way, and registered its consent to the act, which had already been adopted by the other three orders. The King returned to his palace, in the midst of the acclamations and joyful shouts of the multitude.

The same day, a herald proclaimed the result of the deliberation, the acceptation of the constitutional act, the closing of the diet, and the enlargement of the prisoners of state.

The armies followed the same impulse; they re-entered upon their duty; they decided on obedience to the act of union and of safety; and the cry of war against Russia again resounded throughout Sweden.

This political victory of Gustavus over rebellion, and, unhappily, also over the fundamental laws and national liberty, gave him, for the moment, the means of pursuing and terminating the war with honor; but the resentment of the nobles survived their defeat, and the fatal catastrophe, which terminated the days of the King of Sweden, proved but too clearly, in the end, to what

a degree of violence a long depressed oligarchy can carry their hatred.

It was, however, this same Gustavus, in his own country the enemy of the privileges of the aristocracy, who, but a short time before his tragic end, placing himself chivalrously at the head of the noble French emigrants, wished, under the direction of Catherine the Second, to fight against the royal and the democratic constitution of 1791.

The irritation of the Empress may readily be conceived, at seeing England and Prussia deliver the King of Sweden from the peril which menaced him, through the diversion of the Danes, and give him the means of mastering the diet, of reducing his rebel armies to submission, and of prolonging the war. At that moment, we could have obtained any thing we might have chosen to exact, from that Princess, provided we had concluded the quadruple alliance.

I profited by the circumstances, and insisted on the proposition which I had already made, of negociating with the Turks and of agreeing to a truce with them. Every thing was agreed to; and Catherine, declaring that she would admit of no other mediation than ours, and that of Spain, commanded the Vice-Chancellor, Ostermann, to open a correspondence with M. de Choiseul.

The Prussian minister was instructed to insist, first, upon the enlargement of M. de Bulgakoff, and to authorize our ambassador to negociate with the Porte, an armistice for six months.

At the same time, the Empress announced, that

Prince Potemkin was going to take the command of the two armies in the South, and that he would set out, furnished with full powers to treat of peace. Marshal Romanzoff, wearied by the vexations he had experienced, demanded his retirement.

It was at the instant when I was about to fulfil, with so much success, the desires of my court, relative to peace, and mediation, that I received definitive instructions from Versailles. They were dated the 19th March, 1789.

"The King," M. de Montmorin informed me, "seeing that the court of Spain will not enter into "the quadruple alliance, and that it limits itself to "the maintenance of the treaties by which it is "bound, in case of war, to aid us against the Eng-"lish, has re-considered the present state of Europe. "His Majesty has thought that an alliance, con-"tracted with Russia, would probably embroil us "with the Porte, unless it were kept very secret; "and in that case, it could not produce the de-"sired effect, that of checking the Anglo-Prus-"sian league.

"What is essential, is to act vigorously as a "mediator, and to accelerate peace; for, peace "being concluded, the quadruple alliance will be "no longer necessary. It is always repugnant "to the King, to guarantee the integrity of Po-"land, of a country where, for many years, his "Majesty has exercised no influence; it would "be to expose him without necessity, to the "chances of a remote war.

" Moreover, the States-General are about to " be assembled, with the design of providing for " the difference which exists between our re- " venue and our expences; and it will not be " until after the accomplishment of this object, " that the King will acquire the certainty of ful- " filling his old engagements. Until that shall " be the case, he cannot resolve on contracting " new ones.

" Although he might reckon on the love of his " subjects, and on the immensity of the national " resources, he does not think it would be wise " to alarm people with the prospect of an im- " pending war. France, restored to confidence " in herself, will reserve her vigor and her power, " and will become a truly useful ally. These are " the motives of a necessary postponement. " His Majesty is persuaded that the Empress " will appreciate their solidity, and do justice to " the ingenuousness of his conduct.

" As for the rest, the King perseveres in his " desire to lay down the basis of a projected " union, except, that they shall not be clothed " with forms to render them binding, until the pe- " riod when the inconveniences to which allusion " has been made, shall no longer exist. That " epoch will be when peace shall have been con- " cluded between the two Imperial Courts and " the Porte, and when a complete elucidation shall " have been given of the internal affairs of France, " by means of the States-General.

Such, in substance, were the instructions I

had so long looked for, and which I was authorized to communicate to the Russian minister. M. de Montmorin added to them a project of a treaty, digested by him; and in a letter, in his own hand writing, he acquainted me "that the coun-" cil had been unanimous upon the utility of the " alliance; but the delicacy of the King would " not permit him to sign such a treaty with Rus-" sia, as long as she should be at war with the " Turks.

I carefully conformed with the unexpected orders which I had received, and I did every thing in my power to allay the displeasure which this alteration in our conduct occasioned to the Russian minister. I did not, in the slightest degree, conceal from M. de Montmorin how very delicate and painful my mission had become. "How are we," I said to him, "to sustain our credit, when we " ourselves avow our actual want of power? How " are we to make our alliance desirable, when we " put it off to the very moment of peace with the " Turks; that is, to the very time when the Em-" press will not think that she has any further " occasion for our support? How are we to pre-" vent the reconciliation of Russia with England, " when that power, which has been so useful as " a friend, and has effected so much mischief as " an enemy, promises, in case of a friendly ac-" commodation, a most advantageous peace? In " short, I owe it to my own responsibility, to " submit afresh to his Majesty, an important con-" sideration: should I ever arrive at that which

" seems to me to be impossible, the conclusion of " the projected treaty with the Empress, as then " her position will be changed, she will never con- " sent, in case we should be at war with Eng- " land, to close her ports against the English, in " order to favor us ; and that was the principal " advantage that I looked for in this alliance."

" The Russian ministers, as I had foreseen, " break out into bitter complaints; they reproach " us with our treaty of commerce, and they at- " tribute to it all the embarrassments which are " occasioned to Russia, England, and Prussia. It " is evident that their system is about to be " changed ; the Empress already treats the Eng- " lish minister, Mr. Whitworth, with greater " kindness."

" I have obtained," I continued to M. de " Montmorin, " I have obtained of Russia, up " to the present time, all that the King has di- " rected me to require during five years : confi- " dence, a treaty of commerce, influence, alliance, " mediation. Count Ostermann has deposited in " the hands of M. de Choiseul, all the power and " all the honor of the pacification. Our internal " troubles have weakened our means; but here, " our court has still retained all its credit and " all its dignity.

" I shall redouble my exertions to defend some " of the weak points of our situation ; but, should " the scene change, I trust that the goodness of " the King, and the candor of the council, will " attribute such a revolution to circumstances

"alone, which it must be impossible for me to "control."

In the beginning of May, a courier from Vienna brought dispatches for the Empress, which caused her deep anxiety. They apprized her, that the Emperor Joseph had received the sacrament. The Princess was so much affected, that she became ill. A second courier, however, relieved her, by bringing tidings that the life of the Monarch was no longer in immediate danger.

At that period, Catherine the Second experienced every kind of disappointment: the Swedish fleet, favored by the wind, was no longer blockaded. The King of Sweden, delivered from the Danes, and triumphant over his opponents in the diet, found himself at the head of an obedient army, which was animated by a desire to expiate its rebellion by victories. M. de Choiseul, whose situation became more and more delicate, informed me that the English and the Prussians were on the eve of concluding a treaty of alliance with the Porte, by which these three powers were to engage to sustain the revolution which was then proceeding in Poland, in order to snatch that country from the yoke of Russia. At the same time, the Anglo-Prussian league invited Catherine to break off all ties with the Emperor and with France, and to confide to it the power of mediating and conluding a peace. On that condition, it promised to secure to Russia the cession of Oczakoff, and to compel Gustavus to lay down his arms.

The Empress was too proud to lend herself to an agreement, which was rather exacted by others, than solicited on her part; and which would compel her to break her faith towards her old ally. But it appeared to me very probable that, being supported neither by Spain nor by us, she would finish, as well as the Emperor, by reconciling herself with the league, at the expence of Poland; for, in politics, the quarrels of the strong almost always terminate to the detriment of the weak.

At this period, I saw the Pacha of Oczakoff, who had been brought to Petersburgh. He was a very distinguished Turk; for he exhibited, in his conduct, and in his language, something of reason and capability. I asked if he should not fear, on the conclusion of a peace, to return to his country. "Your government," said I "is extremely "rigorous; it is said that it punishes misfortune "as well as crime, and that even you, will not be "sheltered from its severity, although your cou- "rage, and your vigorous defence, have gained "you the esteem of your enemies."

"Our customs are not well known to you," replied he; "it is a voluntary, and not a forced "surrender which, with us, renders a commander "of a place culpable. I was taken in an assault, "and no one can, therefore, reproach me. But, "although I had defended the city which was "confided to me, for ten years, and I surren- "dered it by capitulation, my head would be "struck off."

"What! I exclaimed, "and, in that case,

" would you go and submit yourself to that un-
" just punishment?"

" It must be done," replied the Pacha; " it is
" impossible to fly from one's fate; and every one
" ought to resign himself to the directions of Allah.
" To be desirous of escaping would be, at once,
" a folly and a crime." Certainly fatalism could not be carried further!

At this time the Empress, took a journey to Czarskozelo, and permitted me to follow her. Some good news, which she had received, restored her gaiety. The Emperor was convalescent; Kamenski had fought with a considerable body of Turks, and Michelson had defeated a division of the Swedes; Romanzoff, dividing his army into three bodies, had marched one against Yassy, another into Valachia, and the third towards Bender.

We very soon learned that Kamenski, following up his advantages, had attacked the Pacha Ibrahim, near Galatz, had taken him prisoner, and made himself master of his camp.

What I had long foreseen was now realized. Prince Potemkin, and some of the ministers, were desirous of inducing the Empress to unite herself more closely to England; and to effect their object, they told her that M. de Choiseul had furnished the Turks with an exact plan of the country. They added, that this ambassador, falsely accusing the English and the Prussians of carrying on intrigues, had, himself, excited the Mussulmans to continue the war.

Catherine too readily credited the assertion, and spoke of it in anger, to the Prince de Nassau. "The court of France," she said, "does not act, "towards me, with good faith; or its orders are "exceedingly ill executed by its ministers. I "am informed (and I have had some difficulty to "bring myself to believe it) that M. de Segur com- "municates to my ministers nothing but feigned "extracts from the despatches which he receives "from M. de Choiseul. The King of France has "paid subsidies to Gustavus III, but he refuses, "under worthless pretences, to conclude the "quadruple alliance. All this politic conduct, "so far from being ingenuous, appears, to me, "almost hostile.

"I do not wish to say much about this, because "I fear but little the injury which France could "do me. Nevertheless, I do not like to be "thought the dupe of false professions. I desire, "then, that you, who must, by this time, I hope, "have become a Russian, will write, confiden- "tially, to M. de Montmorin, in order to apprise "him that his refusal to conclude the treaty of "alliance, and the conduct of his ambassador at "the Porte, no longer permit me to repose any "confidence in him."

Nassau hastened, without delay, to give me an account of the conversation, and I easily recognized, in all the false intelligence, an intrigue of Prince Potemkin, who hoped, by these means, to alienate the Empress from us. At first, he succeeded. Catherine, on her return to Petersburgh,

ceased to speak to me with her ordinary kindness; I was no longer invited to the private evening parties at the Hermitage; and when I attended with all the court and the diplomatic body, instead of calling me to her, she shewed an extreme coldness towards me, and afterwards addressed friendly words to the ministers of England and Prussia.

Our rivals were triumphant; and all those who regulate their conduct by constantly balancing the vicissitudes of power, regarding me as a minister in disgrace, gradually broke off their intercourse with me.

I was shocked at the success of these underhand artifices; and, as they were calculated suddenly to annihilate the influence, I had acquired with so much difficulty, in order to unite Russia with France, I earnestly longed to discover some means by which I might retort these manœuvres, that were at once of a ministerial and Anglo-Prussian character.

While matters were in this state, I read a very long despatch from M. de Choiseul. I could not have thought it possible for him to have written one more perfectly suitable to the occasion. That ambassador gave me a detailed account of the whole of the conduct of the English and Prussian ministers at Constantinople, and of the artifices which they employed, to induce the Turks to abandon all idea of a truce, or of peace. Not only did it contain the substance of their notes, and of their memorials, as they presented them to the Porte, but also the very words, and hostile ex-

pressions, to which those ministers had had recourse.

If it had been possible for me to make it known to the Empress, she would certainly have been greatly irritated, on discovering how far they had endeavored to deceive her; but the despatch of M. de Choiseul was written in ciphers, and I have already said that they had prejudiced this Princess against my sincerity, by inducing her to believe, that I had given to her ministers, a false analysis, of the letters of our ambassadors.

It was, however, important to me, not to allow so favorable an opportunity to escape, which probably would not again, for a long time, present itself. Therefore, under these circumstances, I determined to take a decisive course: it was indeed of so novel and daring a nature, that I did not judge it convenient to report it to my court; and I never informed even M. de Montmorin, respecting it, until my return to France.

If this hazardous plan had not succeeded, it would perhaps have appeared blamable; for, by it, I might have compromised the secrecy of the state cipher; and in now relating so bold a resolution, I feel it to be my duty to warn all young French diplomatists, from an imitation of my example. Indeed, to risk a step similar to that which I then undertook, one ought to be acquainted as perfectly, as intimately as I was, with the mind, and the character of the Sovereign, who inspires us with so much confidence. Success could alone absolve me; and it was complete.

I entreated the Prince de Nassau to come to me. "You see," said I, "in what a crisis our cre-" dit stands, and what means are taken to sub-" vert it. You also know that the Empress, who " is deceived, unites to a nobleness of heart, a most " exalted character; nothing that is great, gene-" rous or delicate is a stranger to her bosom.

" Learn then the means, by which I have " determined to retaliate upon our enemies for the " intrigues by which we are assailed. Here is a " despatch, which I have read from M. de " Choiseul and deciphered; the words are in-" terlined under the ciphers. The perusal of " this will dispel every doubt, as to our since-" rity, and the artifices of our enemies; I have " folded it up such as it is, and written on the en-" velope: *It is not to the Empress, but to Catherine,* " *that I address this despatch.*

" Take it, my dear Prince; request of the " Empress a private audience, and, on my part, " present her with this letter. If she should " retire for a moment from her cabinet, I have " been mistaken in her. A secretary can copy " some lines, the key of the cipher is compro-" mised, and I become blamable. But, if I am " not deceived, she will not leave you, she will " not retire, but will return you my despatch, upon "the spot. Go at once and return with all speed."

Nassau applauded me, hastened to the palace, and obtained the audience he requested. As soon as he was alone with the Empress, and mentioned my name, she said with evident displeasure:

" What can M. de Segur want with me?" He, then, without answering, presented my letter to her.

Catherine took it, evinced marked astonishment on reading the direction, opened the envelope hastily, and began to read the despatch. The Prince de Nassau immediately drew back, and feigned a wish to retire. The Empress hastened up to him, took him by the hand, and said: " Oh! Prince, do not go; I would not " have you leave me for a single instant."

She then resumed the reading of the letter; and having rapidly finished it, she refolded the despatch, and returning it to the Prince, said to him with feeling, and in a tone of voice expressing deep emotion: " Run, Prince, run to M. de " Segur, and assure him that never, during my " life, can I forget this noble proceeding, this " powerful mark of his esteem and of his con- " fidence; I am worthy of it; he has well ap- " preciated me."

I awaited, with agitation, the return of my messenger, and it is easy to conceive how great was my satisfaction, when he informed me of the successful and speedy issue of his mission.

The next day, the court was held at the Hermitage. As soon as I appeared, the Empress called me, and made me sit next to her; she attended but little to the actors, and during the continuance of the play, maintained an uninterrupted conversation with me, in a low tone of voice.

The surprise of the ministers discovered itself on their countenances; those of our rivals, who triumphed the day before, disguised but badly their disappointment. The scene was changed; from that instant, the Empress redoubled her favor and her kindness towards me, and she no longer listened, but with disdain, to the insinuations which it was again attemped to throw out against the good faith of our country. Notwithstanding the troubles to which France became a prey, she preserved in Russia, as long as I remained there, her dignity and her influence; and Catherine kept so well the secret, which my confidence had reposed in her, that neither Prince Potémkin, nor any of her ministers, were able to discover by what means I came to be so suddenly re-admitted to her favor and esteem.

As the ardent character of the Sultan, Selim, and the ambition of Gustavus III, as well as the hostile views of England and of Prussia, removed all probability of an early peace, both sides accelerated their armaments. The Prince de Nassau devoted himself to forwarding the equipment of a flotilla at Cronstadt. He had received orders to sail within three weeks, with thirty galleys, ten zebecs, three vessels carrying long guns, a great number of gun-boats, and fourteen thousand land soldiers. This flotilla had a formidable appearance, but it wanted pilots and experienced seamen, and the troops were composed of mere recruits.

On informing M. de Montmorin of the un-

favorable turn which the negociations had taken, I could not refrain from renewing my complaints. "It is unfortunate," I wrote to him, at the commencement of June, "that, having, "by our union with the imperial courts, alarmed "the Turks, the Swedes, England, and Prussia, "we should now displease the Emperor, and the "Empress, by refusing to sign the quadruple "alliance. The result must be, that we shall "experience all the evils of that alliance without "gathering any of its fruits, which, at a later "time, will be no longer at our disposal. Ca- "therine still adheres to the project; but she so "strongly desires peace, that, if M. de Choiseul "has not speedy and unhoped for success, she "will accept the good offices of the Prussians and "the English, provided they give her the cer- "tainty of terminating the war."

My fear was well founded; for I knew, by a sure and secret means, that Prince Potemkin, previously to his departure, had made some overtures to the English minister, for an arrangement. "Our project of a union with France," he had said to him, "existed but for a moment. The "assurances given by M. de Segur entrapped us; "but, very soon opening our eyes, we have dis- "covered, that we cannot reckon on the French "government; whilst a thousand considerations "prove the utility of an intimate connection be- "tween Russia and England. The commerce of "the English with us is immense; at Peters- "burgh, their merchants actually form a colony.

" Every thing indicates the necessity of a union; " circumstances are favorable, and we ought to " hasten to profit by them."

In the mean while, some incidents came to light, after that conversation, which thwarted Prince Potemkin, and nourished Catherine's displeasure against her secret and open enemies. She learned that a Swedish sailor, having secretly entered into the midst of a Russian squadron in Copenhagen roads, in a fire-ship, had been surprised, pursued, and arrested at the house of the minister of Sweden, who had given him an asylum.

At the same time, the cabinet of London continued to menace Denmark with its arms, if it persisted, in conformity with its treaty, to support Russia in her war against the Swedes. On the other hand, I made the Empress acquainted with a noble step taken by our government; it had just declared to the cabinet of London, that it would not permit that its vessels should insult the Danish shores and fleets.

The Russian minister, satisfied with this firm and sincere proceeding, now transmitted to me an official note, drawn up in much softer language than I had hoped for: it was a reply to the despatch of our cabinet, relative to the quadruple alliance. By this reply, the Empress renewed, to the King, the assurance of the desire which she still entertained of forming an union with him; but, instead of replying, article by article, to the counter-project suggested by M. de Montmorin, she said, that before she could discuss them, she must

previously consult with the Emperor, as we had desired to have an understanding with the King of Spain; this was, on both sides, a studied finesse, a polite way of suspending the negociations without destroying them.

At this period, Prince Potemkin, who was constantly endeavoring to injure us, interdicted our merchant-vessels from entering the Russian ports in the Black Sea, under the pretext of preventing the works and armaments, which were being carried on there, from becoming known.

I complained strongly of this infraction of our treaty of commerce, and gave to the Russian cabinet a very long statement, to which the ministers could make no reply. They even gave me to understand that they partook of my opinion, but that it was in vain for them to oppose the power of Potemkin, who would make us wait a long time, for the satisfaction demanded.

When I renewed my solicitations, Catherine, instead of directly answering them, complained of the activity of her enemies, and of the inaction of her friends.

At this time, her prudence gained a severe victory over her pride. She was about to withdraw her troops from Poland, in order to remove all pretence of war with Prussia; but, at the same time, she wished to know if she could calculate upon us, if, notwithstanding this step, Frederic William should commence hostilities; as, she said, he had held out, to Poland and Sweden, some expectation of his doing so.

But, it must have been well known, that I could at that period, give but a very vague reply. It was in the month of June, 1789, when the royal authority in France was menaced from all sides; the deficiencies were encreasing, and the States-General, instead of endeavoring to overcome them, were divided into parties

Only a short time back, all classes of the kingdom, had been united against arbitrary power, and against the abuses which had been too long tolerated; but, since that, the question had entirely changed: it was no longer a question of economy and liberty, but one of equality; it was necessary to decide, whether the right of suffrage should be confined to certain classes, or should be universal; whether the different classes of society should remain separated; whether their privileges should be preserved or destroyed; whether our ancient institutions should be modified or overturned; in short, whether we should work a wise reform or a tempestuous volution.

War was declared between the aristocracy and democracy; their first hostilities agitated every mind, inflamed every passion. A numerous party stubbornly defended the ancient system and its privileges. A new social order was desired and demanded by the great mass of the people; and they found themselves encouraged by many of the nobility, who were animated with an ardent love of liberty.

At the end of a long calm, no one was en-

lightened by that experience, which is the sad and slow result of faults and misfortunes. The government, weak and improvident, had prepared nothing, had decided nothing before hand; for a long while its strength had been undermined, and the remains of a worthless splendor alone remained; ministers and measures having been changed twenty times in a few years, it was no longer supported by the confidence of the people. The throne resembled a car, with the axle-tree broken,and the horses no longer obedient to the reins.

In this state of things, and, as if by way of climax to the whole, a last act of imprudence assembled the states of the nation, near the capital, and, almost, in the very focus of the unbridled passions of an immense population.

Under such circumstances, was it not surprising to find foreign powers soliciting and hoping for succour from our arms? nothing proves more strongly, how unjust it now is, to reproach the French nation with the misfortunes, the violences, and the crimes of a revolution, which time alone brought about, which could not be, exclusively, attributed to any one, and which, out of France, as well as within, had neither been calculated upon, nor foreseen by any enlightened mind.

The truth is, that from the one extremity of Europe to the other, learning, philosophy, and reason having made rapid strides during the last two centuries, the ideas of justice, of order, and of liberty, being every where dissemi-

nated, the principles of morality and of equity triumphing every day over prejudice, the people found themselves generally disposed to substitute the reign of law, for that of caprice and arbitrary power.

Therefore, in the outset, the remonstrances and resistance of our parliaments, and of the notables, the projects of M. Turgot, the acts and writings of M. Necker, the harangues of M. de Malesherbes, and the discourses of our academies, excited almost universal admiration.

A natural sentiment drew forth those applauses—it was the love of a wise liberty; but, when equality raised its formidable levelling doctrine, and private interests clashed with each other, then all was changed, and, in every country, the higher classes, who governed, found themselves, or believed themselves to be, involved in a sort of war with the people.

Such was the real cause of those long storms, which are, even now, scarcely calmed: was it possible to foresee, or to avoid them? Can we now distinguish, without injustice, who were the persons that excited and increased them, by their fiery ardor, or their imprudent resistance? This is what passion may affirm, but what reason will deny.

The discontent, occasioned to the Empress, by the slowness of her armies in the South, the insurrection of Poland, the menaces of England against the Danes, the manœuvres and hostile preparations of the Prussians, and finally, our inaction,

did not torment her mind so strongly, as did the progress of the King of Sweden in Finland.

As she had been personally active in the direction of the war in the North, the reverses and successes of her generals upon a territory so adjacent to her capital, agitated her incessantly; besides, her pride was wounded at seeing so comparatively unimportant a Monarch, bring her power and renown into jeopardy.

Unhappily, she had chosen two generals to command her troops, Poushkin and Michelson, the one wanting activity, and the other, prudence. Michelson, advancing with temerity, against the Swedes, and without being supported, obtained, at first, a brilliant success at Kira, but was afterwards repulsed with loss, and wounded.

While Poushkin detached, too late, a body of troops to possess themselves of the province of Savolax, Gustavus penetrated, with ten thousand men, into the Russian territory. Poushkin retired before him, and delayed fighting till the flotilla of the Prince de Nassau, already anchored off Wibourg, had reached Frederiksham.

An internal grief, experienced, at this time, by Catherine, seemed, in some measure, to divert her mind from its political anxieties. That extraordinary woman presented in her character, an astonishing mixture of the strength of our sex and the weakness of her own. Age had set its stamp upon her features, but her heart, as well

as her self-love, preserved their youth; both the one and the other were now severely wounded.

She discovered that her Aide-de-Camp, her favorite, Count Momonoff, loaded by her with kindness, preferment, and riches, after having many times deceived her, groaned beneath the yoke of a favor which grievously restrained his liberty.

The Empress, hoping yet to revive his sensibility, wrote to him, saying, that she saw, with sorrow, that all her endeavors could not succeed in rendering him happy, and in dispelling his melancholy. "As I wish," she said to him, "your happiness before every thing, I have "formed the design of uniting you with the "richest heiress of the empire: answer me, will "this project satisfy your wishes?"

Momonoff refused the proposed marriage; but, at the same time, he avowed to Catherine that all her favors, though inspiring him with the most profound gratitude, could not make him happy; that his heart, in spite of all his efforts, had been, for a long while, the slave of an insurmountable passion for one of her ladies of honor, the Princess Scherebatoff. Ashamed at his ingratitude, but incapable of changing his sentiments, he respectfully implored the clemency of his Sovereign.

Catherine, irritated at this unexpected news, quitted her court, secluded herself in her apartments, and countermanded the spectacles which were to have taken place at Czarskozelo; but,

recovering rapidly from a passion and a weakness little worthy of her, she commanded the presence of the Princess and her faithless lover, had them affianced before her, gave a rich dowry to her maid of honor, and to the culpable Count an estate with two thousand peasants, attended at the marriage ceremony, and, in accordance with custom, she herself placed a set of diamonds on the head of the bride. After having gained this victory over her pride, she commanded them to absent themselves from her court.

When Catherine is drawn, her weaknesses are the shadows of the picture; but, at least, they leave the generosity of her character unclouded. Few women, invested with absolute power, would have shewn so much moderation, on seeing their sentiments betrayed and their self-love wounded. That command, which she was capable of assuming over her passions, was the more entitled to praise, because, naturally, as she has often told me, she was extremely warm and even violent in her temper.

It was this sustained moderation which characterised her, and which I could never help admiring, and, the more especially, when I still beheld, not at a distance from her, but at Petersburgh, the celebrated Woronzoff, alive, free, unmolested and rich with her gifts. This was the same woman who was once the mistress of Peter III, and who had obtained, from that Prince, his promise to marry her and to repudiate Catherine and banish her into Siberia.

The Empress, having thus gained a painful victory over herself, had resumed her accustomed life before the newly wedded couple had left Czarskozelo. One change, alone, could be observed in the palace: the courtiers, whether Russians or foreigners, who, until then, had, every evening, paid assiduous attentions to Count Momonoff, now wholly abandoned the disgraced favorite.

As I had received from him some marks of friendship, I thought it right, on such an occasion, to shew him that I was mindful of them. I went to see him, and, for the first time since our acquaintance, I found myself alone with him.

The Empress knew of it, and, before the whole of her assembly, highly approved of my proceeding; she expressed herself, in most contemptuous terms, against the baseness of those who withdrew themselves, with so much precipitation, from a man who had, so recently, been courted and flattered by them.

Ought we not to judge, with some indulgence, this woman, called *Catherine the Great* by the Prince de Ligne, when she exhibited, at the same time, in her conduct, so much firmness, gentleness and magnanimity?

The isolation of Count Momonoff, in the midst of a court which had so long surrounded him with homage, is not surprising in a country subjected to an absolute government. Despotism debases all those over whom it exercises a sway; it cramps the mind and curbs the character.

I can cite an example still more striking, and which greatly contributed, by the sad reflections it suggested, to impress, more strongly than ever, upon my mind, the love of a noble liberty, in spite of all the storms which its enemies, and even its friends, have created, too frequently, around it.

Paul Jones, a sharer in the victories of the Prince de Nassau, had returned to Petersburgh; his enemies, unable to bear the triumph of a man whom they treated as a vagabond, a rebel, and a corsair, resolved to destroy him. This atrocity, which ought to be imputed to some envious cowards, was, I think, very unjustly attributed to the English officers in the Russian navy, and to the merchants who were their countrymen. These, in truth, did not disguise their animosity against Paul Jones; but it would be unjust to affix upon all a base intrigue, which was, perhaps, but the work of two or three persons, who have continued unknown.

The American Rear-Admiral was favorably welcomed at court; often invited to dinner by the Empress, and received, with distinction, into the best society in the city; on a sudden Catherine commanded him to appear no more in her presence.

He was informed that he was accused of an infamous crime; of assaulting a young girl of fourteen, of grossly violating her; and that, probably, after some preliminary information, he would be tried by the Courts of Admiralty, in

which there were many English officers, were strongly prejudiced against him.

As soon as this order was known, every one abandoned the unhappy American; no one spoke to him, people avoided saluting him, and every door was shut against him. All those, by whom, but yesterday, he had been eagerly welcomed, now fled from him as if he had been infected with a plague; besides, no advocate would take charge of his cause, and no public man would consent to listen to him; at last, even his servants would not continue in his service; and Paul Jones, whose exploits every one had, so recently, been ready to proclaim, and whose friendship had been sought after, found himself, alone, in the midst of an immense population: Petersburgh, a great capital, became, to him, a desert.

I went to see him; he was moved, even to tears, by my visit. "I was unwilling," he said to me, shaking me by the hand, "to knock at your door, "and to expose myself to a fresh affront, which "would have been more cutting than all the rest. "I have braved death a thousand times, now I "wish for it." His appearance, his arms being laid upon the table, made me suspect some desperate intention.

"Resume," I said to him, "your composure "and your courage. Do you not know that hu- "man life, like the sea, has its storms, and that "fortune is even more capricious than the winds? "If, as I hope, you are innocent, brave this sud-

" den tempest: if, unhappily, you are guilty, con-
" fess it to me, with unreserved frankness, and I
" will do every thing I can to snatch you, by a
" sudden flight, from the danger which threatens
" you."

" I swear to you, upon my honor," said he,
" that I am innocent, and a victim of the most in-
" famous calumny. This is the truth. Some
" days since, a young girl came to me, in the
" morning, to ask me if I could give her some
" linen or lace to mend. She then indulged in
" some rather earnest and indecent allurements.
" Astonished at so much boldness, in one of such
" few years, I felt compassion for her; I advised
" her not to enter upon so vile a career, gave her
" some money, and dismissed her; but she was
" determined to remain.

" Impatient at this resistance, I took her by the
" hand and led her to the door; but, at the in-
" stant when the door was opened, the little pro-
" fligate tore her sleeves and her neck-kerchief,
" raised great cries, complained that I had as-
" saulted her, and threw herself into the arms of
" an old woman, whom she called her mother,
" and who, certainly, was not brought there by
" chance. The mother and the daughter raised
" the house with their cries, went out and de-
" nounced me: and now you know all.

" Very well," I said, " but cannot you learn
" the names of these adventurers?" " The porter
" knows them," he replied; " here are their names
" written down, but I do not know where they

" live. I was desirous of immediately presenting " a memorial about this ridiculous affair, first to " the minister, and then to the Empress, but I " have been interdicted from all access to both of " them."

" Give me the paper," I said; " resume your " accustomed firmness; be comforted; let me " undertake it; in a short time we shall meet " again."

As soon as I had returned home, I directed some sharp and intelligent agents, who were devoted to me, to get information respecting these suspected females, and to find out what was their mode of life. I was not long in learning that the old woman was in the habit of carrying on a vile traffic in young girls, whom she passed off as her daughters.

When I was furnished with all the documents and attestations for which I had occasion, I hastened to shew them to Paul Jones. " You have " nothing more to fear," said I, " the wretches " are unmasked. It is only necessary to open the " eyes of the Empress, and to let her see how un- " worthily she has been deceived; but that is " not so very easy; truth encounters a multitude " of people at the doors of a palace, who are very " clever in arresting its progress; and sealed let- " ters are, of all others, those which are inter- " cepted with the greatest art and care.

" Nevertheless, I know that the Empress, who is " not ignorant of this, has directed under very heavy " penalties, that no one shall detain on the way,

" into any letters which are addressed to her " personally, and which may be sent to her by " post; therefore, here is a very long letter " which I have written to her in your name: " nothing of the detail is omitted, although it " contains some rough expressions. I am sorry for " the Empress; but since she heard and gave " credit to a calumny, it is but right that she " should read the justification with patience. " Copy this letter, sign it, and I will take charge " of it. I will send some one to put it in the " post at the nearest town. Take courage; be- " lieve me, your triumph is not doubtful."

In fact, the letter was sent and put in the post; the Empress received it; and, after having read this memorial, which was fully explanatory, and accompanied by undeniable attestations, she inveighed bitterly against the informers, revoked her rigorous orders, recalled Paul Jones to court, and received him with her usual kindness.

That brave seaman enjoyed, with a becoming pride, a reparation which was due to him; but he trusted very little in the compliments that were unblushingly heaped upon him, by the many persons who had fled from him in his disgrace; and shortly afterwards, disgusted with a country, where the fortune of a man may be exposed to such humiliations, under the pretence of ill health, he asked leave of the Empress to retire, which she granted to him, as well as an honorable order and a suitable pension.

He took leave, after having expressed to me his gratitude for the service which I had rendered him, and his respect for a Sovereign, who although she might be led into an error, knew at least how to make an honorable reparation for a fault and an act of injustice.

The Empress chose a new aid-de-camp, to fill the place held by Momonoff; his name was Zouboff; he was an officer in one of the regiments of the guards. One, would, if possible pass over in silence, these continued proofs of weakness prolonged even to a period when age left no excuse for them; but, such is the fate of sovereigns, that they have no private life; their friendships and their sentiments too frequently exercise an influence over politics, to escape public attention; it would not be too much to say, that each day of their existence is a page in their history.

The new favorite had been selected without Prince Potemkin having been consulted, and every one was anxious to know, whether he ranked among the friends of the Prince, or would dare to oppose his influence.

For my part, I did not know him, and I regretted the displacing of Count Momonoff, who had always evinced great zeal for the interests of France; but, in a short time, I found that matters in that respect remained unaltered; Zouboff sought my acquaintance with eagerness, and he did not at all conceal from me that he did so in order to please the Empress.

Unfavorable intelligence was still received from Finland. The Swedish General Steding had entirely defeated General Schultz at Pomala, and had taken his artillery. Catherine appeared to me more irritated than alarmed at this check.

She spoke to me with great interest on the affairs of France. "Your *Tiers-Etat*," she said, "sets up very high pretensions; it will excite "the resentment of the two other orders, and that "discord may produce consequences equally dan- "gerous and extensive. I fear that the King will "find himself compelled to make too many sacri- "fices, without succeeding in his endeavors to "allay the public ferment."

I replied, "that without being free from ap- "prehension, I still preserved strong hopes, as "the King, beloved by the whole nation, desired "nothing but the public good, and as, in gene- "ral, the excitement of the people only became "violent and lasting when they found them- "selves opposed and restrained by an unjust "abuse of power."

A few days after that conversation, the Vice-Chancellor, having entreated me to call immediately upon him, informed me of the events which occurred at Paris on the 14th of July. He told me, "that the whole of the population "of the capital had risen, and taken the Bas- "tille; that they had compelled the King to go "to the Hotel-de-Ville, and take the revolu- "tionary cockade; that disorder was at its

" height; in short, that the laws were every " where infringed, the nobility insulted, and their " mansions pillaged."

As I had not received any intelligence (conformably to a system of conduct, so highly blameable in my opinion which prime ministers are induced to adopt, through fear of compromising themselves,) it was impossible for me to give a suitable reply, and to distinguish the parts of the information which were true from those which were exaggerated.

The news spread with rapidity, and was listened to with very different feelings, according to the condition and opinions of the persons to whom it was communicated. At court, the agitation was violent and the discontent general; in the town, the impression was altogether the reverse; and, although the Bastille, could not, assuredly endanger the safety of the inhabitants of Petersburgh, I cannot describe the enthusiasm which was excited among the merchants, the tradesmen, the citizens, and some young men of a more elevated rank, by the destruction of that state-prison, and the first triumph of a stormy liberty.

Frenchmen, Russians, Danes, Germans, Englishmen, Dutchmen, all congratulated and embraced one another in the streets, as if they had been relieved from the weight of heavy chains.

That extravagance, which even now I have a difficulty in believing and in relating, was but of short duration: fear very soon checked the first

emotion; Petersburgh was not a theatre in which such sentiments could be promulgated without danger.

The public attention was soon drawn away from those remote events, and the battles which took place, at a short distance from the capital, absorbed every other consideration. Notwithstanding that a mystery was made of Steding's victory and of its details, they at length became known, as is always the case, in spite of the government, and were greatly exaggerated. The minister became alarmed, and forbade, under severe penalties, all conversation in public places upon the state of the war with Sweden.

Fortune, however, very soon ceased to be faithless to Catherine. She had given orders to the two squadrons of the Tchitchakoff and Kasilinoff to form a junction. The Swedish fleet attempted to oppose them. They fought eight hours without any considerable loss on either side; but the Russians justly claimed the advantage of the day, because they effected the desired junction.

The Prince de Nassau engaged and put to flight twenty Swedish vessels, several of which were eighty gun ships; and, braving the fire of all the small fortified islands which opposed his progress, he fortunately cleared all the channels. He learned also that general Souwaroff and the Prince of Coburg had defeated thirty thousand Turks, taken Foczany, twelve standards and the camp of the Mussulmans.

From all quarters the most alarming letters were received relative to our internal troubles, and, as I persisted in thinking that a mutual good understanding would terminate the dissentions, Catherine said to me: " No one wishes it more than " I do; but I shall only begin to think that it " will be so, when your people shall cease to give " themselves up to those excesses which fill me " with indignation. I warn you, however, that the " English are desirous of revenging themselves " for their reverses in America; if they attack " you, the new war will be of service to you, by " turning against foreigners the fire which now " internally consumes you."

The Empress, in finishing the conversation, expressed herself extremely satisfied at seeing MM. de Saint-Priest and de Montmorin, about the King. " Their wisdom," she said, " inspires me " with great confidence."

About the same time, I learned from a sure and secret source, the new expedients which Prince Potemkin had adopted for the purpose of changing my situation; he had written to the Empress, saying, that it was not good policy, on her part to have the ministers of Vienna and of Versailles, almost exclusively about her person; that such a preference gave displeasure to the other courts, and that, considering the helpless state to which we were reduced by our troubles, it would be prudent to keep on good terms with England. But Catherine, deaf to these representations, and

firm in her sentiments, would not admit Mr. Whitworth into her private intimacy.

A singular occurrence gave great surprise and annoyance to our government at this time. M. de Choiseul had succeeded in obtaining, from the Porte, the surrender of M. de Bulgakoff into his hands. The Russian minister refused to quit his prison on such terms; he demanded that his liberation should take place as an act of direct and solemn satisfaction to Russia.

This was, in my opinion, a dignified mode of proceeding. M. de Montmorin, who viewed it as a want of respect to France, and our ambassador, expected that I should persuade the Russian cabinet to participate in his opinion and his discontent; but I could not realise that hope; it would have been very difficult for me to act with any success against a man whose conduct I approved.

The Empress had soon fresh reason to congratulate herself on the proof of confidence she had bestowed on the Prince de Nassau. That gallant warrior gathered, in the North Sea, laurels not less glorious than those he had achieved in the Liman. Wisely profiting by the imprudence of the King of Sweden, who always advanced, without ensuring his retreat and his supplies, he attacked the Swedish fleet at the mouth of the Kimen, and gained a signal victory.

The battle lasted fourteen hours. The Swedes were put to flight; Nassau captured the Admiral's ship, four others mounting forty guns, a cutter, and three galleys. He took forty officers, and

thirteen hundred sailors and soldiers prisoners, and sunk many vessels near the islands.

The Swedish Admiral was compelled to have recourse to a yacht, to save himself. In that glorious action, the imperial guard increased its renown, and the chevalier de Litta was honorably mentioned.

Nassau immediately disembarked with six thousand men, and marched with rapidity, in the hope of entirely cutting off the retreat of the King of Sweden; but that Prince, menaced by three other Russian corps, which attacked him in front, and upon the flanks, had hastily abandoned the position of Egfort. Nassau pursued him, overtook his rear-guard, took five-hundred prisoners, and a part of his ammunition and baggage. During this time, his flotilla, following up its advantage, destroyed forty more Swedish vessels.

In these engagements, which had terminated so advantageously for him, Nassau met with a great loss, and experienced the deepest regret. M. de Varage, a french naval officer of distinction, directed, by his wise and prudent counsels, the overflowing courage of the Prince; that intrepid seaman, having disembarked, and pursued, with too much ardor, the troops of Gustavus, was killed by the Bashkirs, a horde of savages, who do more injury than good to the Russian army, and who mistook M. de Varage for a Swede.

Nassau, having returned on board his gallies, wished to pursue the King as far as Louisa; but

a gale of wind dispersed his fleet, which re-entered the port of Cronstadt, in triumph, with its numerous prizes and honorable trophies.

At the commencement of the campaign, Gustavus III, always chivalrous, remembering that he had frequently seen, both in France, and at Spa, the Prince of Nassau, who had attracted his attention by his love of war and glory, wrote to him a letter full of courtesy. "I had thought," said he, "after our last conversations, that I "should have had the pleasure of receiving the "offer of your sword; but since, to my great "regret, you have taken up arms against me, I "flatter myself, that on the field of battle, I shall "at least conquer the esteem of such an adver-"sary."

Fortune quickly altered these friendly feelings; and, when the King heard of the very accurate narrative which the Empress published of the victory of the Russians, his self-love being wounded, he forgot his customary moderation, and replied to it by a counter-statement, in which he extenuated his losses and the advantages gained over him.

The Prince de Nassau wrote the following letter to him on this subject, which appears too remarkable not to be recorded in this place.

LETTER FROM THE PRINCE DE NASSAU TO HIS MAJESTY GUSTAVUS III, KING OF SWEDEN.

Petersburgh, Sept. 20, 1789.

"SIRE,

"When your Majesty last did me the honor of "writing to me, you told me that *you addressed* "*yourself to a chevalier, who went every where in* "*search of glory and honor.* I shall endeavor, "certainly, Sire, throughout my life, to justify "the opinion of your Majesty; but, those who "seek honor, can allow of nothing that can make "their truth be suspected, neither do they ad- "vance any thing which is not in accordance "with truth, and which they cannot sustain, and "prove, in the face of the whole world.

"It was under the influence of this *feeling* "that I read, with indignation in the Hamburgh "Gazette, a pretended account of the engage- "ment which I had the honor of sustaining "against your Majesty's fleet.

"That account, Sire, appears to give the lie to "mine; it is, in many respects, absolutely con- "trary to the truth; and I have been surprised "that any one should have had the audacity to "affix a name so respectable as that of your "Majesty, to a document filled with errors and "with falsehoods.

"I hope that your Majesty will have been as "much displeased as I was, and that you will "not refuse me to have it suppressed, and to do

" justice to truth; if, contrary to all probability,
" your Majesty should have authorised the pub-
" lication of so incorrect a statement, I must be-
" lieve that you have been grossly misled by the
" reports you have received, and that your vera-
" city, the first virtue of Kings, will induce you,
" without hesitation, to disavow it, and to punish
" the officers who have rendered so faithless an
" account.

" I send with this letter the refutation of that
" strange narrative, in which I have pointed out
" all the errors. My honor is a pledge for the
" truth of what I assert. I have, for evidence,
" the prisoners and the vessels which we cap-
" tured, the fleet which I commanded, and
" which, far from being disabled, continued at
" sea for not less than eighteen days after the
" battle; cruised, without molestation, within
" twelve wersts of Louisa, and did not return
" to port till after it had encountered a gale
" of wind on the 12th of September. A part of
" that squadron is still at sea, and would be
" prepared to undertake new battles; but it can
" encounter no new combatants.

" I am persuaded that your Majesty is too well
" acquainted with the laws of honor, not to ap-
" prove of the warmth with which I defend mine,
" and which I should considered as injured, if the
" truth of the narrative which I have given, and
" which the Empress has permitted me to pub-
" lish, be for an instant doubted.

" The same motives which have dictated to me " this letter, will induce me to make it public; " and the answer which I hope to receive, will " authorise me, without doubt, to repeat as pub- " licly the assurances of the very profound res- " pect which I have avowed towards your Ma- " jesty, and with which I have the honor to be,

" Sire,

" Your Majesty's, &c."

If Gustavus shewed so much vexation at his defeat, the Empress was not thoroughly satisfied with her victory; she said, " that, had it not been " for the faults of Poushkin, the King of Sweden, " whom the Prince de Nassau was closely pursu- " ing, could not have escaped." She spoke to me with that feeling, and also made some reproachful remarks on the conduct of our cabinet, whom she accused of secretly engaging with England, not to permit the complete overthrow of the King of Sweden.

I assured her that such was not the fact, since we knew very well that all she desired, was a prompt peace and a reasonable satisfaction.

" Very true," she said, " but all the world does " not believe it. Besides, recollect that, by endea- " voring to keep on good terms with the most op- " posite parties, you must at last be given up to " your enemies, and abandoned by your friends."

The Empress spoke to me, also, respecting the refusal of M. de Bulgakoff to accept of his en-

largement, through the interposition of France. "If this be the case," she added, "I shall censure him; but, if it appear that an escape was proposed to him, I shall approve of his conduct."

The arrival of a courier from Prince Potemkin, sent at this time, put an end to the uneasiness of Catherine respecting the issue of the campaign. He announced to her that the Prince of Cobourg, and Souwaroff had given battle to the Grand Vizier, and beaten him completely.

Their camp, fifty standards, and eighty cannon, had been taken from the Turks, and six thousand of their men had perished in the field of battle. The Russian general, Ribas, had taken the Fort of Atgibey from the Mussulmans. From another quarter, intelligence was received, that the Captain-Pacha, defeated, and pursued by Prince Repnin, had shut himself up in Ismail. In the meanwhile, Potemkin and Anhalt beat the Beglier-Bey of Romelia, and killed six hundred of his men.

About the same time, the Austrians invested Belgrade, which was taken soon afterwards; but I did not hear of it until after my departure from Russia.

The Prince de Ligne, who distinguished himself in this campaign, wrote me two letters, part of which I am about to transcribe. They display all the gaiety and whimsical humour of his character.

From my Head Quarters at Semlin, June 1, 1789.

"I could have written to you during the winter, "what you did not know, and since that time, I "could have written, what you do know; but I "feel no pleasure in writing, unless I can have "the answer in a few hours. At Paris I never "loved, nor wrote to any one on the other side of "the river. Sailing with you on the Borysthenes, "separated from you only by a partition of Chi- "nese taffeta, on board of one of those splendid "galleys which were engaged in a triumphant "and magical voyage, I waited only a few minutes "for your morning epistle.

"A sort of armistice, or rather a compact of "good fellowship, affords me time to give con- "certs in a superb tent, as Turkish as my guests, "on my bank of the Danube; all the garrison "of Belgrade comes to the other bank to listen "to them.

"Like the King of Spain, who made Farinelli "sing the same air to him every day for forty "years, I have a performance, every evening, "of *La Cosa Rara*, which thus, you will perceive, "ceases to be so. Some pretty Jewish, Arme- "nian, Illyrian, or Servian women attend; they "are part of the nobility of Semlin.

"When any Turks pass the frontiers, I chastise "them, and Osmand-Pacha thanks me for doing "so, and says that he cannot make them obey "him. As I prefer giving them a dressing, to "receiving letters of apology, having occasion "the other day to fire a salute in honor of a little "victory in the Bannate, I caused all my artillery

" to be loaded with ball, to avenge a sentinel " whose head had been cut off at Michelowitz.

"This succeeded, and eight visitors, attracted by " curiosity, were killed near the fortress. The Pa- " cha, apparently found all this quite natural. I " had been in hopes that he would be angry at it. " On my part, I do not complain of a few musket- " shots which are fired at me, sometimes by way " of amusement, when I am taking the air. But " a Lieutenant-Colonel of our advanced posts " towards Pantschowa, having disapproved of " their having done so to a Captain of the corps " of Branakocsky, complained of it to the Aga " Mustapha, who thus replied to him: *I salute* " *you, neighbour Terschitz. You say that there* " *is an armistice; I know nothing about it. You* " *talk to me about the Pacha of Belgrade; I will* " *not be dependent upon him. You offer me your* " *assistance in case I need it; learn that the sub-* " *lime Porte, does not leave me in need of any* " *thing; I want nothing but to drink your blood.* " *You say that I may trust you; know, that in these* " *times, we must trust nobody. I salute you, neigh-* " *bour Terschitz.*"

" Now for the answer which I sent, in the name of neighbour Terschitz: " *I salute you, neigh-* " *bour Mustapha. Your letter is quite that of a* " *Turk; I am glad of it, for I was afraid there* " *were no more of them. You say you want to* " *drink my blood; I do not care about yours; for* " *what is the blood of an Aga? Do what you can,* " *come when you will: I have ordered my people* " *to make you my prisoner, the first opportunity;*

" *I wish to see you. Good day, neighbour Mus-*
" *tapha.*"

" Adieu, my dear Segur; I leave you, to see
" ten fine long battalions of reinforcements, which
" have arrived from Austria; may I soon have
" occasion to make use of them!"

" Belgrade, 18th October, 1789.

" Here we are, in this rampart of the East, the
" doors of which are opened, not with the fingers
" of Aurora, but with the fingers of fire.

" The boldness and promptitude of the passage
" of the Saave, the rapidity of Prince Eugene's
" march and entrance into the lines, the intrepidity
" of the reconnoitring made to the very pallisade;
" all this was the work of a fortnight, and was
" really worthy of the best days of Marshal Lau-
" don; it turned our heads and set the Turks
" mad; for my part, I was content with dis-
" mounting their gun. The Prince attacked Bel-
" grade on the right bank of the Saave, and I at-
" tacked it on the left, where I was the eagle of
" that Jupiter whose thunder I was wielding.

" The taking of the fortress was ensured by
" that of the town, which was effected through the
" brilliant valour, and judicious conduct of the
" Count de Browne, the worthy nephew of Mar-
" shal Lacy.

" During this grand and vigorous enterprize, I
" made a diversion with my fleet on the Danube;
" and then, to repair the loss of some days, and
" many men, in attacking a covered way, I re-
" doubled the fire of my batteries, and established

" a new one in the island, a hundred and fifty " toises from the fortress, which immediately ca- " pitulated.

" I saw, with great military pleasure, and great " philosophic pain, the thousand shells, rising into " the air, which I had caused to be fired off, into " the midst of the poor infidels. I heard their " cries of terror; for those of the wounded, were " stifled by fire and death.

" Let us leave these subjects of horror. I have " spoken long enough to the colonel of dragoons; " I now address myself to the head priest of the " temple of peace. What a source for reflection! " The word *capitulation* had scarcely been pro- " nounced, when ten thousand conquered mingled " with ten thousand conquerors; fierceness gave " way to lenity; fury to compassion; the strata- " gems of war to fairness; violence to kindness.

" Coffee was bought, sold, and drank in common. " The Turk, honest in his dealings, fixed his price, " took out his precious effects, concealed under " the fortifications, went on with his affairs, and, " without being too urgent, obtained his money " when chance threw his customer again in his " way.

" Philosophers, without knowing it; the rich " proprietors were smoking on the ruins of their " houses and their fortunes. Osman-Pacha, the " stupid governor of Belgrade, was smoking in " the midst of his court, arranged in order of " state, as if he had been still in command, and " as if he had not expected a capidgy-bachi to

" me him in his head, which was now no longer " at his own disposal: it had, indeed, become " perfectly useless to him, from the firing of our " first shot.

" The beauty and variety of the rich and showy " colors of the Janissaries, the caps of our grena- " diers, their turbans, our cuirassiers, the spahis, " not prostrate, although beaten, their splendid " arms, their horses, as proud as themselves, their " deportment, firm and correct, notwithstanding " their misfortune, and the appearance of the " banks of the Danube and the Saave, covered " with these picturesque figures, pleased the eye " and gratified the mind.

" It was, however, rather melancholy, to see them " conveying, by land and water, the bodies of " men and cattle which, during the siege, there " had been no opportunity of burying. The " smells of death, of fire, and of essence of roses, " rose up at the same moment; for, even to that " extreme, are voluptuousness and barbarism com- " bined.

" The Marshal solicited for me the cross of com- " mander of the military order of Maria The- " resa, and the Emperor has already sent it to " me. I understand that they were well-satisfied " with my promptitude, and especially with the " effect of my last battery, which made the Turks " capitulate.

" I should have written to you during the siege, " but I was afraid that my letter might become " posthumous, and I was unwilling to let you

" know what was passing in my head before I " knew whether it would be left on my shoulders. " Adieu, friend of my heart."

This varied style, this agreeable mixture of wit and reason, of philosophy and levity, of humanity and warlike ardor, will, probably, be blamed by those ill-tempered and severe men, who, by analyzing, dry up every thing, and forget the wise advice of an ancient writer, that philosophy should sacrifice to the Graces.

The progress of learning and liberty has, certainly, contributed greatly to the advance of human reason. But, on the other hand, has it lost nothing on its way?

Although I am not one of those obstinate encomiasts of the good old times, I cannot help regretting that chasteness of taste, that grace, that exquisite playfulness and urbanity of manners, which always kept society alive, by giving admission to good sense dressed in smiles, and to wisdom in its liveliest attire. At the present day, there are too many people resembling, in character, a man of property who, only intent upon what is useful, would exclude flowers from his garden, and wholly reserve it for corn, grass and fruit trees.

We were drawing to the close of September: the campaigns in the South, and in the North, might be considered at an end. It was evident that the King of Sweden, who felt over-anxious to repair his recent disaster, and reckoned upon the support of the Prussians, would, for a long

time to come, banish from his mind all thoughts of making peace.

I knew from M. de Choiseul, that the Sultan Selim, so far from listening to his pacific proposals, only attended to the hostile advices of England and of Prussia.

Having, therefore, obtained all that I could have desired from the court of Russia, a treaty of commerce, the acceptance of our mediation, and the promise of signing the four-fold alliance, as soon as our government should decide upon adopting this measure, I had no other part to act at St. Petersburgh, than that of a mere observer of events; and it could be performed as well by a chargé d'affaires.

I had written to M. de Montmorin, in the preceeding month, requesting leave of absence: I felt, in every way the necessity for it, suffering as I did from a complaint in the chest, which might, it was said, be attended with dangerous consequences, if I remained another winter in this frozen climate. My absence from home had already lasted five years; and portentous storms were bursting over my native country.

There is so little dependance to be placed upon intelligence, received at a distance of eight hundred leagues from home; accounts are so much exaggerated! I heard at every moment that blood was flowing in France, that private residences were given up to pillage, that contending opinions had armed all Frenchmen against one another, that even Paris and Versailles were

the theatre of turbulent, and even sanguinary events.

We had been informed that, on the 4th of August, the nobility, whether owing to a kind of enthusiasm or folly, or to an apprehension of the violence of an unruly mob, who had already been guilty of dreadful excesses in the vicinity of the Town-Hall, had just offered to the nation, at a night's meeting, the sacrifice of its ancient rights, and of all its privileges.

Shortly afterwards, the assembly, on a motion of Duport, affixing a seal to these sacrifices by a single decree, had pronounced those laconic and solemn words, which are yet resounding in both hemispheres: *The feudal system is abolished.*

The event of the 14th of July, might have been considered as a transient insurrection; but that of the 4th of August sounded a mighty revolution: it was a new social order forming itself upon the ruins of the old one. How many dissensions, how many battles and storms were portended, by this instantaneous triumph of equality over a proud and ancient aristocracy!

After this blow, which shook the deep-rooted basis of our old institutions, it was quite evident that the common link, uniting the different branches of the social edifice, being now broken, an adventurous attempt was about to be made towards rebuilding anew the entire fabric.

This was, perhaps, called for by the progress of the age, of intelligence, and of reason itself; but

the passions were opposed to it; they would, probably, overrun Europe in quest of allies, arms, and support.

These reflections created a deep, though a contending feeling of agitation in my mind. My hopes were revived, my imagination was elevated by the love I bore to liberty, to that liberty which I had so ardently imbibed in the precepts and examples of antiquity, which I had so long envied to England, and for which I had so lately fought in America.

It would be difficult for me to describe my emotion, on reading some fragments of the speeches uttered, in the early days of our assemblies, by Clermont-Tonnerre, Lally-Tollendal, Mirabeau, Mounier, and other orators, the words of which resounded, for the first time, at the French rostrum.

On the other hand, with how many gloomy reflections were these flattering illusions alloyed! The anxiety felt by a virtuous King and by a Queen already the sport of calumny, my gratitude towards them, my doubts respecting the fate of my family amidst the stormy violence of a turbulent population, which had already stained the cradle of liberty with blood; in short, the contradictory pictures of those scenes of troubles, disorders, and commotions, which each party presented, according to the different prisms through which they viewed them, every thing combined to render intolerable, to my feelings,

a continuation of an absence already so much protracted; and I felt inexpressible joy, on receiving permission to take my departure, and to return home.

I had experienced so much welcome in Russia, and been treated with such flattering marks of distinction, that, under any other circumstances, it would have been difficult for me to quit that country without the deepest regret; but all I could do now, was to disguise, as much as possible, the satisfaction I felt at the immediate prospect, of again beholding my country and my family.

My preparations were soon made: I presented my secretary of legation, M. Genet, to the ministers, as the chargé d'affaires; I drew up, and left with him a note, containing the most detailed instructions for the direction of his conduct, and for facilitating the objects of his mission; lastly, I took leave of the Empress; and this audience would have given me the deepest affliction, had I suspected that I was beholding this Princess for the last time; but I was absenting myself on leave, and expected to return in a few months.

She condescended to express some regret at my departure, and dwelt much upon the affairs of France. "Tell the King," she added, "of the "sincerity of my wishes for his happiness. May "his goodness meet its merited reward! may "success attend his plans! may the evils, that "penetrate his heart, soon come to an end, "and France soon recover its tranquillity, and its

"preponderating influence! I am well satisfied "that this influence will be exerted in my favor, "and never in support of my enemies.

"I regret much your departure; you would do "better to remain with me, and to keep away "from those storms of which you do not, perhaps, "foresee the full extent. Your predilection for "the new philosophy, and for liberty, will pro- "bably incline you to support the cause of the "people; I shall regret it; for aristocracy is my "profession, and I must adhere to it; reflect well "upon the subject; you will discover France to "be in a very feverish and unhealthy condition."

"I fear so, Madam," I replied; "but this "makes it a duty for me to return home."

She kept me to dine with her; and rendered the separation exceedingly painful, by the many marks of kindness she bestowed upon me. I hastened to take leave of several persons who will ever be present to my memory, and who, for a space of five years, had treated me less as a stranger than as a fellow-countryman and a friend.

I quitted St. Petersburgh on the 11th of October, 1789, and proceeded to Katschina to take leave of the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess. I had only intended to make an hour's stay; but my carriage having broken down on the journey, their Imperial Highnesses obligingly insisted on my remaining two days with them.

With much wit and information, the Grand Duke, Paul Petrowitz, possessed the most restless and suspicious temper, the most changeable cha-

racter; he was often affable to the extreme of familiarity; oftener harsh, despotic, and haughty; never, perhaps, did there exist a man more uncertain, timid, or capricious; less calculated, in short, for imparting happiness to others or to himself.

His reign bore evidence of this: the many acts of injustice which he committed, the disgrace or banishment of so many persons, are not to be ascribed to a wicked disposition, but to a kind of mental malady. He was the torment of all who approached him, because he was his own torment. He always fancied that the throne was encompassed with precipices. Fear disturbed his judgment: through his constant apprehension of imaginary evils, he gave rise to real ones; for, sooner or later, a monarch never fails to communicate to others the terror to which he is a prey, and the mistrust which he harbors in his heart.

At a later period, one of my colleagues in the chamber of peers, who was at St. Petersburgh during the reign of Paul, quoted to me some of his expressions that bore the deepest stamp of his despotic character: having allowed General Dumouriez to call frequently to see him, and the General having, one day, omitted to appear at the palace, the Emperor asked him, the next time he presented himself, whether he had been unwell.

"No, Sire," replied Dumouriez; "but, having "been invited to dine, by one of the most im- "portant personages of your court, I could not "excuse myself from accepting the invitation."

"I would have you to know, Sir," rejoined the Emperor in a severe tone of voice, "that there is "not any person of importance here except the "one I may be addressing, and so long as I am "addressing him." Is it possible for the pride of power and the contempt of mankind to be carried to greater lengths!

In the early days of my arrival in Russia, this Prince had shewn such a warm attachment to me, as, I think, I have already mentioned, that it bore the appearance of infatuation. This fancy did not last long; it turned to indifference, when he found that the Empress, his mother, honored me with marks of kindness, and admitted me into her intimacy.

For a long time past, he had ceased to express any wish for a renewal of my intercourse with him; but, at the moment of my departure, a fresh caprice of his mind procured me a return of confidence. He conversed with me, for several hours, and, to the exclusion of almost every other subject, respecting his pretended causes of complaint against the Empress and Prince Potemkin; the unpleasantness of his situation, the dread in which he was held, and the melancholy fate he had to expect from a court, accustomed to suffer and allow no other reign but that of women: he was intimidated by the reflection of his father's deplorable end; it was constantly in his thoughts, and was the settled idea of his mind.

In vain I urged that his prejudices deceived him; that, so far from fearing him, his mother al-

ways left him at liberty to hold his court without any interference on her part, and even to retain near him, at a short distance from Czarskozelo, two battalions, the officers of which were of his own nominating, which he trained, armed, and clothed at will; whilst his mother, banishing all apprehension, only kept one company of her guard near her person.

" If this Princess, Monseigneur," I said, " does " not call you to her councils, and gives you no " share in public affairs, allow me to observe that " it would be very difficult for her to act other- " wise; aware, as she is, that you find fault with " her inclinations, her connections, her system of " administration, and her political conduct. As " to the evils which you dread, by anticipation, " rest assured that your fears contribute to raise " them; shew yourself superior to them, and they " will infallibly disappear."

I did not succeed in persuading him; and, by incessantly recriminating against the ministers, and all those who were honored with the confidence of the Empress, he was endeavoring to prove to me, that, notwithstanding my five years' residence in Russia, I was very imperfectly acquainted with his character.

" Explain in short," said the Prince to me on one occasion, " why, in the European mo- " narchies, sovereigns quietly reign and succeed " each other, whilst the throne of Russia is so " often stained with blood?"

" I see no difficulty, Monseigneur," I replied,

" in tracing the cause of all those catastrophes;
" and, no doubt, it has not escaped your observa-
" tion: every where else the peace of nations and
" the tranquillity of kings is secured by the inhe-
" ritance to the throne in the male line. This is the
" important difference existing between the ancient
" Asiatic, Roman, Greek and barbarian monar-
" chies, and the modern ones; the progress of civi-
" lization may, perhaps, be ascribed to this stabili-
" ty. Here, on the contrary, there is nothing fixed
" on the subject; every thing is open to doubt;
" and the sovereign selects any successor he
" pleases: hence you have a perpetual source of
" ambitious hopes, of intrigues and conspiracies."

" I acknowledge it," he rejoined, " but where
" is the remedy to be found? with us, the habit
" is of long standing, a sanctioned custom; and
" an alteration in so important a point could
" never be effected without danger to the innova-
" tor; for, I repeat it, the Russians prefer seeing a
" gown rather than an uniform upon the throne."

" Nevertheless, I am of opinion, Monseigneur," I rejoined, " that this happy revolution might be
" brought about at some signal epoch of a new
" reign, such as a solemn entry, a coronation,
" when the people's minds are open to confidence,
" to pleasure and to hope."

" I can well conceive it;" he said, embracing me, " this might be attempted; I must reflect
" upon it."

I thought no more of the subject; and he, perhaps, equally forgot it. When, however, on his

ascending the throne, a few years afterwards, Paul established, as a fundamental law, the hereditary succession to the throne in the male line and in the order of primogeniture, it occurred to me that our conversation might have contributed in operating this memorable change in Russian legislation.

I was much flattered at the gracious reception given to me by the Grand-Duchess; she could not fail to inspire all who knew her, with the warmest admiration and the most respectful attachment.

After taking leave of their Highnesses, I departed, and, being anxious to expedite my journey, I travelled night and day, without stopping, until I reached Warsaw.

Had I even been wholly ignorant of the commotions excited in Poland, for the last eighteen months, by the desire to recover liberty, and by the engaging promises of the King of Prussia, I might, when traversing a great part of the kingdom, have discovered, from the general movement, the fermentation which was working in the minds of the inhabitants of that unhappy country.

The peasantry, alone, retained that sullen look, that physiognomy void of expression, that immoveable apathy, which are the mournful and constant appendages of slavery, a silent stagnation of mind, which the advocates of absolute power or of oligarchy are pleased to call *order* and *tranquillity*.

Every road, however, presented a crowd of

[illegible] on horseback and in carriages, traversing and crossing each other in every direction. The [illegible] together in the towns and public squares, and conversed with much warmth. Every [illegible] bore the appearance of the greatest agitation. But in this state of effervescence opened the [illegible] to speculation. The Jews, those numerous and [illegible] vampires of Poland, were [illegible], and displayed more activity than [illegible].

[illegible] struck at Warsaw, with [illegible] and imposing sight; instead [illegible] and peaceful societies I had left [illegible], those assemblies graced by the presence of [illegible] Stanislas Potocki, of Czar[illegible], [illegible], Sapieha, Matuszewitz, [illegible], Zamoyski, [illegible] so many handsome and [illegible] the members of the Polish court, [illegible] those scenes where the conversation only [illegible] questions of morality, of sentiment [illegible] [illegible] political meetings, [illegible] discussions, too often embittered by the violence of contending opinions.

[illegible] Poland, long held under the yoke of three [illegible] with the greater part of its territory, [illegible] of liberty, appeared to [illegible] and to have resumed its ancient [illegible].

[illegible] the days of the Jagellans again [illegible] the same warlike ardor was [illegible], the same turbulent spirit, the same passion for independence, and contempt for the

storms that follow in its train; in short, the same chivalric character, the only advantage of that feudal system which was then falling to ruins, and of which no more traces were to be seen except in the courts of ancient Germany and the forests of Sarmatia.

The Poles scarcely appeared to be the same people: their occupations, customs and language, every thing had undergone a change; those ardent warriors had laid aside their modern garb, which brought to mind their humiliation, and resumed their caps, their feathers, their long robes, their military mustachios and brilliant swords. The ladies, giving excitement to their courage, had assisted in cutting the flowing hair of their husbands and children, had embroidered their scarfs and splendid sashes.

The Russian ambassador, formerly surrounded with courtiers, was leading a solitary and almost isolated life in his residence. The palace of Stanislas Augustus resemblod more the head quarters of an army in the days of Sobieski, than a court. Nevertheless, this unfortunate Prince did not partake of the general delirium; if he was deficient in that strength of character so requisite in the stormy circumstances of that period, he was not wanting in knowledge, wit, and penetration.

The revival of liberty, of which his people entertained such sanguine hopes, appeared to him as a dream and a mere chimera; he recollected that the Poles, a nation so far behind every other,

possessed neither discipline, infantry nor fortresses; that they neither had money, nor the agricultural or commercial industry, which supplies it.

This Prince was of opinion that the embarrassment of the two imperial courts would not last; he knew that the illusive promises of the King of Prussia, had no other object than to effect his own aggrandisement; he foresaw, in short, that the three oppressors of Poland, after some short discussions, would again unite at the expense of that defenceless country, by completing the dismembering and the ruin of it.

Thus, Stanislas Augustus, too clear-sighted not to perceive the precipice before him, and yet too weak to resist the torrent which he had vainly attempted to arrest in its course, allowed himself to be carried along, against his own inclination.

The King no sooner heard of my arrival, than he invited me to wait upon him; he shut himself up with me in his closet, and gave me a most distressing picture of the deplorable situation in which he was placed. "Well, Count, said the Prince, "you find Poland in a condition very "different from what it was, when you left it at "the end of 1784; my fellow countrymen have "changed rapidly from dejection to hope, from a "state of timid dependence, to one of temerity. "What impression does this unexpected revo- "lution create at St. Petersburgh? what do you "think of it?

"You must be aware, Sire," I replied, "that

" the Empress is no less dissatisfied than asto-
" nished at it; she would certainly have given vent
" to her displeasure, had she not apprehended
" that, by yielding to this first impression, she
" might afford a pretence for war to the Prussians
" and the English, whom she thinks already too
" well inclined to join the Turks and the Swedes,
" with a view of weakening her power; and, as her
" offers of guarantee, of alliance, and of friend-
" ship, had been received with a disdain highly
" offensive to her feelings, I confess to you that
" both Count Cobentzel and myself have had
" great difficulty in pacifying her, and in inducing
" her to adopt the moderate councils she received
" from the Emperor and the King of France.

" For my part, I am not surprised that, after
" long groaning under oppression, the Poles
" should have eagerly laid hold of the first favora-
" ble opportunity for recovering their indepen-
" dence. This cry of *liberty*, which resounds in
" every direction, does not proceed from a wild
" imagination, but from the bottom of their
" hearts. It presents itself before it reaches our
" ears: even before they have spoken, the word
" *liberty* may be read in their conduct, deport-
" ment and looks; in short, in all their features.

" But, what astonishes me is, that they should
" have so openly thrown off the yoke, before they
" have organized their forces, or provided money
" and every means that are requisite for uphold-
" ing so noble a determination. Independently

[illegible] never could offer any resistance to [illegible] powers that encompass them; [illegible] appears to me, that compelled to seek a [illegible] in that quarter, they have fixed upon [illegible] that possessed most strength and dis- [illegible] and can afford least security; [illegible] upon which I think I may [illegible] more clear that the only object [illegible] in offering his protection [illegible] in possession of Dantzig [illegible] Town.

"[illegible] right," said the King, "and I agree [illegible] on every point. But it is not possible [illegible] these truths be understood, in [illegible] and exasperated state of the pub- [illegible] minds. Austria and Prussia having as- [illegible] to the Empress the mournful honor [illegible] and seeming as in our dependent [illegible] since the infamous dismembering [illegible] —the Poles attributed to her, [illegible] in their misfortunes. All resentments are [illegible] against her. The conduct of her troops, [illegible] insulting [illegible] of some young officers, the [illegible] of the ambassador of Russia, [illegible] raised a hatred against the Russians, the [illegible] of which is the more violent, as, from [illegible] it has been the longer suppressed.

"When I saw Catherine the Second at Kanieff, [illegible] appeared to me fully intent upon repairing [illegible] upon frankly supporting us, and [illegible] upon guaranteeing our security for a long

" time to come, by bettering our condition. I " believed her, and returned here, elated with " hope.

" Accordingly, no sooner had the Turks and " the Swedes declared war against her, than, " corresponding with her first overtures, and re- " minding her of her promises, I induced her to " propose to us a treaty of alliance: she eagerly " determined to adopt this course. Count de " Stackelberg made the official proposal to me; " it was communicated to the diet; and I sup- " ported it, by every argument that appeared to " me most calculated to convince the public mind " of its utility.

" I failed in my attempt; the intrigue and ac- " tivity of the ministers of the King of Prussia, " flattered, deceived, and inflamed the passions. " Luchesini in particular, repelling as mere ca- " lumnies every hint thrown out respecting the in- " terested views of the King of Prussia, too easi- " ly satisfied the public mind, already prejudiced, " that Frederic William, aiming at a dignified and " unsullied glory, wished to preserve Europe from " the ambition of Russia, and felt no other desire " than to oppose a strong barrier to that con- " quering power, by restoring to Poland its in- " dependence and liberty.

" The envoy for England spoke in the same " sense, and held out the hope of a British ar- " mament in favor of the Swedes. On the other " hand, the King of Prussia, having protested " against the proposed alliance, the Empress no

" longer persisted in it, and even did me some in-
" jury, by ascribing to me the first idea of that
" project, which experienced so much opposition
" in the diet.

" The rest is known to you; breaking through
" all restraint, they have abolished the permanent
" council; they wish to effect a total change in
" the form of government guaranteed by Catherine.
" The recall of the Russian troops has been de-
" manded; no attention is paid to the protests of
" the ambassador of Russia. There is even a
" talk of a plan of alliance between England,
" Prussia, Holland, Turkey, Sweden, and Poland.

" Such is, with us, the present state of things;
" and, in order to retain the affection and confidence
" of my nation, I am compelled to follow it in the
" imprudent course it is pursuing, which may,
" perhaps, at a later period, accomplish our ruin."

" I have it inm y power, Sire," I replied,
" to afford you a proof of the sincerity of the
" intentions manifested by the Empress towards
" you; you are aware, that she still desires
" to conclude with us, with the Emperor, and
" with Spain, a fourfold alliance that might be-
" come a check to the alarming designs of the
" Anglo-Prussian league; well then, in every
" project communicated to me by her administra-
" tion, one of the principal clauses has always
" been the guarantee of the integrity of Poland,
" and of its independence. But, I am of opinion
" that this Princess, by proposing to you a partial
" and premature treaty, without waiting for the

" conclusion of such an alliance, which would " have had the effect of opening the eyes of many " people, has only exasperated and inflamed the " public mind."

" I agree with you," rejoined Stanislas; " but, " when it is not in our power to do good, we " should at least endeavor to mitigate an evil. " I know that you are connected, by ties of friend- " ship, with many members of the opposition; " you will see them, and render me an essential " service, if you can succeed in making them " understand, that, in respect to our political and " commercial interest, Russia is less opposed to " us than Prussia; that she would be a much " more formidable enemy, and that it is therefore " highly essential for us to live in good harmony " with her, instead of provoking her resentment; " in short, that this would be the only means of " augmenting our forces, and of effecting our re- " generation without any obstacle."

I gave him this promise, though I did not entertain any hope of success: and, in fact, having spoken to some Poles in the above sense, I found them so exasperated as hardly to allow me a calm hearing.

Ignacius Potocki alone, who was one of the most elegant and enlightened men of his country, appeared to understand me. " You may be right," he said, " but it is too late: the die is cast, and " were I, besides, to decide upon adopting your " advice, I should only ruin myself, without any " necessity, in the opinion of my fellow country-

" men. Believe me, when I assure you that this " opinion is now so general, so violent, so firmly " rooted, that a Pole cannot hear the mention of " Russia without turning pale with fear, and " bursting with anger; as for myself, I was un- " able to listen to you without the strongest emo- " tion. The bare name of *Russian*, is sufficient to " remind us of the loss of our liberty, our laws " and our glory, to recall all the outrages so long " inflicted upon our families and our honor."

It will readily be believed, that I no longer hazarded ineffectual insinuations, which would be wholly disregarded. I even ascertained that some evil-disposed persons, who had heard of these conversations, represented me as an ardent friend of the Russians, and as charged with secret instructions from the Empress; in short, as I felt anxious to attend the diet on the following day, an attempt was made to prevent me, by the intimations given of an intrigue which had been got up, in order to subject me to some unpleasantness of a public nature.

I disregarded the intimation, and repaired to the assembly; the tribune, to which I was led, was soon filled with distinguished characters, both of the opposition and of the King's party; their reunion about me would have sufficed to check any malevolent design, if it ever was intended.

I was particularly struck with the appearance which this Polish assembly presented to me: the almost Asiatic costume of the members composing it, their proud looks, the vivacity of their action,

the noise of their sabres dragging upon the ground, and bringing too strongly in remembrance those stormy times, when swords were so often drawn to interrupt the deliberations; every thing was calculated to impress me with the idea that, going back to remote ages, I was in the midst of those ancient Poles, who had so often conquered the Turks, the Muscovites, and the Princes of Germania. I regretted my not understanding the orators who succeeded each other, and many of whom appeared, by their eloquence, to create a powerful impression upon the audience.

At night, when I returned to the King, I learned the mournful events which had occurred at Versailles, on the 5th and 6th of October; the details varied more or less according to the different versions; some reported that the Queen had been exposed to the most imminent danger, that a great number of body guards had been massacred, that the national assembly had been invaded by brigands; others said, that some troops and body guards having, in a drunken revel, trampled the national cockade under foot, and loudly announced counter-revolutionary projects, the people of Paris become furious, had proceeded to Versailles, assailed the palace, and forced the Monarch to return with them as a prisoner to the capital; others, in short, of a less alarming character, only spoke of some excesses committed in the night time, but speedily suppressed by the national guard.

It is easy to believe that these various reports,

which were all of a painful nature, would occasion me much anxiety at so great a distance; I therefore determined to hasten my departure, and continued my journey on the following day.

At night, whilst my men were preparing for the journey, and as I was sitting in my room, before a fire, with a book in hand, I suddenly heard a gentle noise behind my arm chair; I turned round, and saw a tall man, dressed in a long brown robe, with a rich sash, red boots, a fur cap, and a long sabre, and pointing a pair of pistols at me, which he held in his hands.

My surprise was great, but of short duration; and I soon burst out into laughter, when I recognized, under that costume, and those long mustachios, the dark, keen, and lively eyes of the tall General Branitski, the nephew of Prince Potemkin.

"Indeed, my dear friend," he said to me, "It "appears, from what is written to us, that there "is a dreadful uproar in your country. Our agi- "tation here, is mere child's play. Your assem- "blies are more stormy than a Polish diet; and, "as there is no knowing what may happen, in a "country which is in a state of combustion, I "offer you these two travelling companions; I "wish they were more valuable; but, rest as- "sured, they are excellent."

Branitski was wrong; for his pistols were beautiful. I received the present with the cordiality with which it was offered. I was afterwards de-

prived of these pistols by a revolutionary committee, when I could have wished to have tried them against its members.

After a short conversation, moistened by a few glasses of Tokai, of which Branitski was more than moderately fond, we separated. I started at break of day, with a mind absorbed by the afflicting news I had just received.

The Marquis de Noailles, our ambassador at Vienna, had offered me an apartment in his house; I accepted it. I found him in consternation at the intelligence sent to him from Versailles.

He had, for a long time back, felt the liveliest alarm at the political wavering of our ministry, at its irresolution, at the bold progress of our rivals, the rapid advances of our revolution, and the forebodings of a general combustion.

He confided to me the gloomy presentiments that agitated his mind; he considered the ruin of France as certain. I was not without some uneasiness for the present moment; but the future presented itself to me with better hopes; for I could not forget that such a nation as France, which was powerful, rich, and warlike, of industrious and commercial habits, and thirsting after every species of glory, might be overwhelmed for a time, by storms and misfortunes; but that it possesses, within itself, all the means of breaking through those difficulties with regenerated power and glory.

M. de Noailles, however, regretted, like myself, that the King's council had not, by signing the

four-fold alliance, turned the prevalent of the public mind into another direction.

The ambassador presented me to Prince de Kaunitz, and to every distinguished character at the court and in private societies.

I had solicited an audience of the Emperor; but I was assured that this Prince was dangerously ill, and could not receive any one. He would, however, have recollected, amidst the kindness with which he honored me in the Crimea, and the wish he had expressed to me of clearing up a mystery that had awakened his curiosity, respecting the nature of the intimate intercourse supposed to exist between Catherine the Second and Prince Potemkin, to which intercourse was ascribed the firm constancy of their mutual affection: contrary, therefore, to general expectation, he permitted me to see him.

I accordingly repaired to the palace, where I found him on his legs, but so painfully altered, that I immediately perceived that his dissolution was unavoidable, and near at hand.

The Emperor received me with marked kindness; he conversed, a long time with me, about the affairs of Russia, and especially about the Swedish war.

As, during his journey to Taurida, he had repeatedly reproached me with forgetting his incognito, and giving him the titles of *Sire*, and *your Majesty*, I had fallen so much into the habit of pleasing him, on this point, that I must frequently, without perceiving it, have called him *Count*,

during this conversation. He perceived it, and said to me, with a smile: "You are a strange "man; in Crimea you always persisted in call- "ing me *Sire;* and at Vienna, you will only fancy "yourself speaking to the Count de Falkenstein."

Turning, afterwards, to a more serious subject, he complained of the obstacles opposed to the four-fold alliance. "It would have prevented," he said, "many misfortunes. Your ministers "have been too apprehensive of war; had it oc- "curred, your parliaments could not have refused "money to the King, and the ardor of the French "would have flown to the camps. Who could "foretell, however, what might have happened? "every nation seems a prey to a general delirium; "the people of Brabant, for example, revolt be- "cause I desired to grant them what your coun- "try so loudly calls for." He then stopped, remained silent, and was plunged, for a few moments, in a deep meditation.

The troubles of Louvain affected him, at this time, to such a degree, that he could not conquer the anxiety which their progress occasioned him; and, in 1790, on the eve of his death, he said to Prince de Ligne: "Your country has killed me; "the capture of Ghent has brought on my agony; "Bruxelles, abandoned, will be the cause of my "death."

Hoping that I should not give displeasure if I attempted to withdraw him from his painful reflections, I asked him if he would deign to commit to my charge a letter for the Queen, his

'She is at this moment," I said, "in a 'very much agitated situation, surrounded by parties 'coming and going, and fighting against each 'other. Removed from that atmosphere of trou-'bles and of passions, your Majesty might give 'her some salutary advice."

"What, I entrust you with a letter!" he replied; "you urge yourself. I perceive that, 'arriving from Russia, you are not aware of the 'state of effervescence and disorder in which 'you will find your native country; the peo-'ple is every where in arms: some fancy that 'brigands are approaching: others are plunder-'ing country houses. There is no longer any 'police, because every one pretends to direct 'himself. A traveller is arrested on the most 'trifling suspicion: this might happen to you; 'and, if letters from me were found upon your 'person, there is no knowing what may befall 'you.

"I confess, Sire," I resumed, "that the reports 'which have reached your Majesty are exagge-'rated. If, however you apprehend that your 'letter would be exposed to the risk of being dis-'covered, and be productive of inconvenience, 'might you not, at least, make me the bearer to 'the King and Queen, of any suggestions you 'may deem useful to them under such weighty 'circumstances?"

"What counsels," rejoined the Emperor, rather hastily, "what counsels would you have me give, "when I see them surrounded by people who

" persuade them that a regiment, a company of " body guards, some acclamations, and cockades " put on in the midst of a drunken revel, will have " the effect of arresting and crushing a revolution? " I pity them; but, at this distance, I could not " point out any other means of extricating them " from their trying dilemma, than great prudence " and firmness; if they possess these qualities, " all may yet be well; if not, I have nothing to " say to them."

These rather unbrotherly expressions, were, doubtless, to be ascribed to the displeasure which his own affairs occasioned him; but I was greatly embarrassed, on my return to France, when I had to render to the Queen an account of my interview with that Monarch. He dismissed me, and I never saw him afterwards.

Posterity would only have had to speak the praises of Joseph II, if he had shown less ambition, and more steadiness, in his plans. A vain desire for glory, led him to undertake, against Frederick the Great, a war, as short as it was unproductive of any result. Wishing to extend his possessions and his commerce, to the prejudice of Holland, the fear of our arms compelled him to renounce this project. Though desirous of remaining at peace with the Turks, he fought them, and impoverished himself by the war, rather than lose the friendship of Catherine. Lastly, having formed the design of freeing his subjects of Brabant from the yoke of their lords and of an ambitious clergy, he drove them to rebellion; because

[illegible] contrary means, in order to instil [illegible] amusement [illegible] into a people who [illegible] prepared to receive them.

This Prince, however, without being a great man, was [illegible] Empress equally just, virtuous, and [illegible] a mention severe to himself, indulgent to others, [illegible] inexorable, accessible to truth, [illegible] rewarding misfortunes, in encouraging [illegible] and in rewarding merit.

Prince de Ligne, who sincerely deplored his [illegible] wrote to the Empress Catherine the following lines, which I cannot avoid quoting in this place. "It will be said by the soldier: Joseph [illegible] I [illegible] many a cannon shot at the dike of [illegible], but many a musket shot in the suburbs of Semlin. He has had medals struck [illegible] rewards of bravery. By the traveller: what splendid establishments for schools, for hospitals, or prisons, and for education! By the manufacturer: what encouragement given to commerce! By the common laborer: he has himself repaired the ground. By the hero: he was our protector. By the Presidents [illegible] every department, the heads of all offices: he was our chief hero, whilst at the same time he superintended us. By the ministers: he was calling a sacrifice to the state, of which he called himself the first subject. By the sick: he never ceased to visit us. By the citizen: he embellished our towns with squares and public walks. By the peasant and the servant: we spoke to him whenever we pleased. By heads

" of families: he aided us with his advice. By " society: he was safe, and of amiable manners; " he related agreeably; there was much point in " his conversation; truth could be told to him " upon every subject."

Prince de Kaunitz, constantly honored with the confidence of Maria Theresa, had retained the same ascendancy over the mind of Joseph II. This experienced minister was one of the most intelligent men of the last century; but his extensive genius included caprices as extraordinary, and fancies as whimsical as were exhibited by General Souwaroff and Prince Potemkin. All his whims were patiently borne by the most distinguished foreigners or residents in Vienna.

Although advanced in years, he still affected pretensions in the decoration of his person which would have covered a young man with ridicule; his head-dress consisted of a profusion of locks, and, in order that they might be powdered with perfect evenness, he proceeded to a closet destined to this purpose, between two rows of servants, who, armed with large puffs, covered him with a cloud of hair powder.

Often fancying himself ill, and being greatly affected by the alterations in temperature, he was known to change his dress twenty or thirty times in the same day.

One of the talents, to which he laid claim, and which he set the most value upon, was his being the best horseman in Europe. The greatest pleasure that could be done to him, was to go to a

spacious riding house, where he passed a considerable part of the day, and to admire the dexterity with which he performed every kind of equestrian exercise.

There was never any fixed hour for his meals; his guests, therefore, incurred the double risk, either of arriving too late, or of being compelled to wait several hours for him.

At the desert, a looking glass was placed before him, with a bason, tooth picks, and a sponge, and he unceremoniously washed his mouth and teeth with perfect composure, no one daring, in the mean while, to retire from the table; this had become a matter of course, and every one gave way to his humors.

Having received an invitation from this Prime Minister, I was introduced to him by the Marquis de Noailles: he gave me a polite, but rather cold reception. Addressing the Marquis de Noailles in a loud voice, at the end of dinner, he said to him: "Ambassador, I have had news from "France: they are plundering and committing "murders more than ever: all heads are upset; "the country is a prey to frenzy and madness."

I imagined the ambassador was going to reply; but he remained silent, considering, no doubt, that his silence indicated sufficiently his disapprobation of so unbecoming a remark.

As I was younger, rather impatient, and unable to contain myself, I said in the hearing of every one: "It is very true, Prince, that France "is at this moment attacked with a burning fe-

" ver; it is even said to be a contagious malady, " and that we have received it from Bruxelles."

This unexpected retort made every one smile, and appeared greatly to astonish the prime minister, who gave no reply; but he did not go through his customary toilet, and almost instantly withdrew from the table.

I expected he would shew me some ill-humour, in return for my vivacity; but the contrary was the case; his coldness soon changed to a friendly reception, and even, for the few days that I remained at Vienna, he frequently invited me to call in the morning upon him, that he might converse with me respecting the passing events.

I must acknowledge that, in those interviews, he displayed that superiority of reasoning and knowledge, which had procured him so great a reputation in Europe.

Prince de Kaunitz was well aware that there existed in France a party, violently opposed to the alliance of our court with his own, and that this party was daily increasing its influence, whether through hostilities to the Queen, the recollection of the losses which that alliance had drawn down upon us during the seven years' war, or in short, through mere spirit of opposition.

It is quite certain that, at the period of the disturbances in Holland, the same party had falsely accused the unfortunate Maria-Antoinette of sacrificing the money and the consideration of France, to the interest of the Emperor her brother.

Accordingly, Prince de Kaunitz urged me to

combat this party, and to refute the writings which it profusely distributed; with this view, he loaded me with every praise that could flatter the vanity of a young diplomatist.

Notwithstanding the interest I felt in these conferences, I could not take upon myself to protract an absence already too long, and I departed for France; I could not resist a feeling of emotion, which drew tears from my eyes, when I again beheld my country, then a prey to every danger, and to all the calamities of a revolution.

During an absence of five years, and at a distance of eight hundred leagues from home, I could not form an idea of the extraordinary changes which our laws, our character, our manners, and our public mind had experienced in the space of a few years. The most frequent correspondence is inadequate to describe such disorders; and the letters I had received at St. Petersburgh, in the origin of our political storms, bore the impress of such contending opinions, and of such opposite passions that they had only afforded me contradictory and confused notions respecting our real position; so that, when I returned to my native country, I was not unlike the Epimenides of old, awaking out of a sleep.

Even along the road, and before addressing any one, I experienced a strong emotion of surprise; every thing bore, in my sight, an unexpected appearance; citizens, peasants, workmen, women, all shewed in their deportment, their action, and their features, a certain quickness, pride, anima-

tion and independence, which I had never discovered until then.

An extraordinary movement reigned every where; I saw men grouped together and speaking with vivacity in the streets and squares; my ears were struck by the beat of drums in the midst of villages; and I was surprised at the great number of armed men that were seen in all the towns.

If I questioned any persons of the lower classes, they replied to me with a proud look, and a bold and haughty tone of voice; I witnessed every where the proofs of those sentiments of liberty and equality, which had then grown into passions of such unruly violence; in short, when I departed from France, I left behind me a quiet people, bent, by long habit, to the yoke of servitude; on my return I found it in a proud attitude of independence; and perhaps too ardent to enjoy its new liberty with any degree of prudence.

However great my impatience was to return to the bosom of my family, the time and the road were rendered so short to me by the reflections that agitated my mind, and the novelty of the objects which gave rise to them, that, when I came within sight of Paris, I was almost surprised at having so soon arrived.

I embraced my father on meeting him, and congratulated him for having quitted the ministry, when he could no longer do any good by remaining in it. "This wise retreat," I said, "has

" spared you the affliction of witnessing the " many errors, the many faults that have brought " on the dissolution of government, without your " being able to oppose any resistance to them."

He retained the same firmness of character that had always been his peculiar merit; the same tenderness for me, a tenderness upon which I set so high a value; but he no longer displayed the same calm and impartial mind, which had so often struck me with admiration.

This change made a forcible impression upon me, and taught me, from that moment, to be prepared for all the opposition and violence I was about to witness in the characters of men.

My father, like every other person of his own time, had always kept clear of the notions inculcated by the new philosophy. Entertaining a religious respect for our old institutions, every deviation from them, appeared to him a dangerous act of folly; the destruction of the order of things, under which he had come into existence, only presented to him the image of a people in a state of frenzy.

His prudence would not have recoiled at a few gradual reforms. But he considered that any revolution must be fatal, which, under the pretence of bursting every fetter, would break so many links which he held in sacred veneration.

Accordingly, his severity would proclaim as mad, and even as guilty men, all those who took a part in that revolution; he spoke to me of several of my friends in terms the more painful to my feelings, as they were unjustly applied; for

nothing could exceed the elevation and disinterestedness of their sentiments; and, even supposing they had been deceived and carried too far, by an over-ardent love of liberty, and of the public welfare, no error could be more excusable in the sight of a virtuous man!

But I soon discovered that this opinion of my father, so far from being peculiar to him, was a picture of the sentiments of the greater part of the higher classes of society: the same impressions were entertained by almost every man of his age and rank; forgetting all the causes that had brought about the destruction of the old order of things, and rendered it almost unavoidable, they only saw in it the blow directed against order, public discipline, the ancient rights of the crown and of the nobility, against their habits and their interests. They smarted every where under the wound, and considered as hardly better than felons and enemies, all those who did not agree with them.

From this first conversation, therefore, in the bosom of my own family, it was easy for me to discover, what would be the spirit of a whole party, that which was then denominated the *aristocratical party*.

A remarkable chance presented me, on the same day, with an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the opinions and sentiments of the opposite party, which was then called the *patriotic party:* my friend and nephew, General La Fayette, who then commanded the National

Guard, called, in the afternoon, upon me, and detailed during a conversation of several hours, all the events that had occurred from the beginning of that memorable year.

M. de La Fayette is particularly distinguished by an unbending constancy of character, which always aims, undeviatingly, at the same object. To labor incessantly towards establishing, extending, and consolidating public liberty, such is the paramount idea that has directed his conduct, fired his soul, and dictated all his words, for more than fifty years.

Accordingly, when we again met, he fancied himself at the summit of his wishes, since his country seemed to respond, in a body, to his sentiments, and the reign of the laws was taking the place of an arbitrary system. He seemed, however, deeply afflicted at the turbulent scenes, and the popular excesses that had stained the first days of this revolution.

" I know not by what fatality," he said, " a " certain party, which cloaks itself in darkness, " has come to mix with the people, who desire " only justice and liberty. A crowd of brigands " have sprung from a source which is not " known ; they are salaried by unknown hands, " and, in spite of our efforts, have committed de- " plorable crimes, by taking advantage of every " movement excited by the ill-judged resistance " of the court and of the privileged orders to the " reforms called for by the public voice. It was " in vain that we drove them off, that we punish-

" ed and dispersed them, they always returned:
" after the taking of the Bastille, their rage drove
" them to the commission of dreadful murders;
" they even threatened to plunder Paris; nothing
" short of the organization of a national guard
" was adequate to check their disorders.

" Some of them, though few in number, had
" made their appearance in the provinces; and
" the false rumour of their near approach, which
" was spread in every direction, created so great
" an apprehension, that the people of every
" parish instantaneously flew to arms.

" We have made ineffectual researches, to dis-
" cover the chiefs of these brigands, as well
" as the source from whence emanated those
" alarming reports, that reached, at the same
" time, every town and village in the kingdom;
" it is a problem still unknown to us and to the
" government; I have nothing to guide me, in
" this respect, but mere suspicions, unsupported
" by any proof.

" In the month of October last, this band of
" miscreants, took a part in the disorderly move-
" ments created at Paris, by an imprudent scene
" that had occurred at Versailles, and collected
" together the lowest dregs of the capital. Whilst
" I was endeavoring, without success, to re-
" establish order, and calm the public mind in
" the vicinity of the Town-Hall, I was informed
" that these wretches, drawing a numerous
" crowd along with them, were proceeding in
" the direction of Versailles, and proclaimed the

" most sinister designs against the King and the " national representation.

" I was under the necessity of marching, in all " haste, to overtake them; when arrived at Ver- " sailles, I found they had already sullied, with " their presence, the hall of the sittings of the as- " sembly, and threatened the castle. Their fury " was arrested by the national guard who dis- " persed them; and every thing seemed, at " first, to revert to a state of calm. Unfortu- " nately, however, the national guard had only " been entrusted with part of the outward " watch; and, at the break of day, the brigands " gained admittance into the castle, on the garden " side, by a door at which no national guards " had been posted.

" A horrible crime was then on the point of being " perpetrated, which would have thrown the whole " of France into mourning. We fortunately ar- " rived in time to prevent it, and that infamous " conspiracy failed; but we must ever deplore " those fatal occurrences, and the assassinations " then committed.

" The people had taken no part whatever in " that odious plot. Nevertheless, they were in " a state of great exasperation, owing either " to a feigned or real scarcity of corn, or to the " report of a contemplated and approaching state " measure; it was, therefore, impossible to ap- " pease it otherwise than by persuading the King " and his family to take up their residence in " Paris.

" This is what I can safely tell you, as the " truth, respecting those stormy scenes which " have embittered the fair hopes I was led to " entertain, at witnessing the eagerness and the " efforts of an immense majority of the nation, " for the prompt establishment of a representa- " tive government in my country.

" I have no doubt, however, that all these " events were exaggerated abroad as they have " been in France; but you may now judge for " yourself, and you will find in Paris, as well " as in the provinces, an order and a tranquillity, " which hardly could be expected so soon to " prevail in the midst of a revolution, and of the " contending passions that spring out of it."

" I think, however, my dear friend, I replied, " that there yet exists every where a great degree " of restlessness. I acknowledge that France " had been represented to me, during my " absence, as wholly given up to plunder and " massacre; whereas the provinces I have tra- " versed appeared to be in a state of perfect " tranquillity.

" But I have already been informed that you " are yet, occasionally, called upon to prevent " acts of violence, and to repress seditious move- " ments; and that there is now to be seen, round " the prison where the Baron de Besenval awaits " his sentence, a turbulent mob, who loudly call " for his death."

" This is but too much the case," he rejoined; " but you are well aware that the sea always re-

" mains agitated for some time after a storm. In-
" deed, there are but too many passions at work
" in every direction, all having the effect of dis-
" turbing public order, and preventing the return
" of peace."

" How could it be otherwise?" I resumed; "your
" progress has been so rapid! it was nothing less
" than an absolute demolition; you have de-
" stroyed every order of the state, reduced the
" national representation into one chamber, abo-
" lished the privileges of the nobility, placed the
" property of the clergy at the disposal of the
" nation; almost every power is centered in your
" assembly. What a host of enemies you have
" raised against yourselves! you subvert every
" thing in legislation; you proceed at a rapid
" rate, and to great extremes.

" Recollect, that when an edifice built of stone
" is pulled to pieces, the ruins lie, motionless,
" upon the ground; but it is quite otherwise
" with the edifice formed by human institutions;
" to a multitude of people, to entire classes, and
" to their numberless dependents, they have given
" prerogatives, enjoyments, honors, preferments,
" which have assumed, in their eyes, the character
" of rights, and to which they cling as firmly as
" they do to life. I fear that this destruction,
" a total change in so short a time, and plans of
" so much boldness, will expose us to very heavy
" storms."

" It may be so," replied La Fayette; " but
" you imagine to yourself plans, where none have

" existed. We must look far back for the cause " of what is at present occurring, to your so great " surprise and alarm; it is the natural result of " the errors of twenty successive administrations; " of an absence of order and method in the go- " vernment, of numberless dilapidations, and " of every kind of abuse.

" The high bodies of judicature, the clergy it- " self, and the greater part of all those who now " load us with reproaches have, for many years " past, directed all their energy against the acts " of the governing power. After a multitude of " remonstrances, fully as violent in their character " as the speeches uttered at our rostrum, the " parliaments have made an appeal to the nation; " no sooner did the nation respond to the call, " than it was attempted to silence it; the States- " General had been promised; a minister at- " tempted to substitute a plenary court in their " stead: vain and futile attempts! the authority " was forced to give way; the states were as- " sembled.

" Afterwards, by a most unaccountable con- " duct, a stigma was put upon the *Tiers-Etat;* " the other orders refused to join it; they went a " step further; they debarred them admission to " their sittings. The *Tiers-Etat* offered re- " sistance; the people became indignant; a com- " motion ensued; popular ministers were dis- " missed; troops were sent for by the court; a " general explosion was the result, and a violent

" popular hatred was every where manifested " against aristocracy.

" You are now acquainted with the causes; " infer from them the consequences, and decide " whether, in the midst of an effervescence " occasioned by so many faults, others could " have avoided the reproaches now directed " against us. The first and loudest cry of fire " often proceeds from those who have to accuse " their own imprudence for the accident.

" The passed, however, is no longer in the power " of mortal; my conscience is, and has ever been, " the only guide of my conduct. I wish for " liberty, for order, and a good constitution; I " believe that such is also the national wish; and " I hope we may succeed in our object, in spite " of all the passions that are opposed to it.

" My only care, at present, is to attend to the " preservation of the public tranquillity, to con- " tribute, as a deputy, to the consolidation of " liberty, and, at the same time, to protect the " King and Queen from every conspiracy, or " commotion that might endanger their safety."

" These are very praiseworthy sentiments," I said to him; " but I join much more in your " wishes, than I can in your hopes. Placed in the " midst of many parties in a state of irritation, " your position appears delicate, alarming and " surrounded with dangers; for, in reality, you " are, on the one hand one of the principal lea- " ders of the popular party; on the other, in

" command of the national guard, entrusted with " the duty of protecting the King, his family, his " palace, all that belongs to him, against any " attack; necessarily holding constant intercourse " with the court, and therefore, bound to act as " the servant of government.

" It will be a difficult task for you to avoid " giving mistrust to both parties; you would have " the one proceed in a constitutional course, and " would moderate the ardent spirit of the other; " I much fear that, some day or other, their re- " sentment will fall upon you with united power."

" I am aware of it," he replied; " but, having " done my duty, I shall be free from self-re- " proach."

I met, on the following day, another of my friends, M. Alexander de Lameth, who was one of the leaders of the patriotic party, and who gave me a description of passed events, which differed but little from the one presented to me by M. de La Fayette; but his details were more complete with respect to the assembly, to the spirit and the contending opinions that prevailed in it, the divisions, and subdivisions of them. None, I believe, knew its ingredients better; none were better skilled in the art, so novel to us at that time, which may be called the tactics of political assemblies.

A firm and constant advocate of political liberty, Alexander de Lameth exercised, with his two friends Barnave and Duport, a rather powerful influence over his party. He was considered

as holding the first rank among the founders of the representative government in France, and was chosen, at an early period, to be one of the presidents of the national assembly.

To his remarkable speech on the subject of the military power in free states, and to the strong impression it created at the time, he was indebted for his nomination to the presidency of the military committee, of which he performed the most important labors, and for his continuing to hold that situation. His brother Charles, as full of ardor at the rostrum as he was in battle, always followed his line of conduct.

They felt indignant at the early popular excesses committed ; but their hopes of witnessing the establishment of a legal order, in spite of every obstacle, were in no manner abated.

Sufficient attention was not paid, at that period, to the difficulty of overturning at once the deep-rooted prejudices of an ancient monarchy, and the corrupt habits of the majority of the people who had so long remained in a state of ignorance and thraldom.

The Queen sent for me, on the following day, and dwelt, in a long conversation, upon all the sufferings she had gone through ; she afterwards honored me with much of her confidence, for nearly the space of a year ; I was deprived of it, at a later period, by the prevalence of other councils.

This Princess, as well as the King, had so repeatedly been deceived in their expectations,

that they too often sought for advice. Those repeated changes, that succession of counsels of different systems, generally opposed to one another, were not perhaps among the least causes to which the progressive growth of their misfortunes and perils is to be ascribed.

It would be difficult for me to describe the intense emotion I felt, at again beholding this Queen, whom I had left in the plenitude of happiness and of splendor, the object of every affection and of every homage, now relating to me the acts of injustice of which she had been the object; the efforts of calumny directed against her reputation at the time of the affair of the necklace, and against her feelings as a wife and a mother; the charge of attempting to transfer money from France to Austria; her being reproached, in short, with what was most foreign to her heart, an endeavor to dissuade the King from his inclinations to meet the wishes of his people, by necessary sacrifices and reforms.

"We had," she said to me, "invariably se-
"lected for ministers all those who were pointed
"out by public opinion; but the King no sooner
"adopted their views, than we were assailed
"with complaints, clamors, representations and
"remonstrances against those ministers, whose
"advices were considered as pregnant with dan-
"gerous consequences.

"The parliaments, the nobility, the clergy,
"our very court, endeavored to persuade us that

" we were proceeding in a wrong course, that our " confidence was ill bestowed, and that the " wounds of the state, instead of receiving any " relief, were daily becoming worse.

" You know the King's goodness, his self-diffi- " dence, and the only passion he harbors in his " breast, the love of France! he yielded at one " moment to the court, at another to the parlia- " ments. We resorted to other means of doing " good; they were not attended with greater " success. The great bodies of the state, the " notables, all appeared united against us.

" At last, as the States-General were unani- " mously called for, the King convoked them; but " they were no sooner assembled, than they ex- " hibited a scene of discord; a dreadful revolu- " tion has burst over our heads: it was attempt- " ed to crush our authority, the prerogative of the " clergy, the rights of the nobility; and, as we " deemed it to be incumbent upon us to protect " them, the passions of the people have been " worked upon, and their fury let loose against " us; our army seduced from its duty, and the " royal authority openly braved. The King found " himself compelled to send away the regiments " that watched over his safety; and our friends, " become the objects of the public hatred, had to " fly for their lives.

" Paris, in a state of revolt, took possession of " the Bastille; and, although the King, who will " not allow a single drop of blood to be shed in

" his cause, has carried his lenity so far, as to ac-
" quiesce in every thing that was demanded of
" him, it was not possible to restore tranquillity;
" the passions of the people have but increased in
" violence; we beheld, at last, our palace at
" Versailles invaded by brigands. I only es-
" caped death by flying from my chamber in the
" utmost hurry, and seeking shelter in the King's
" apartment. Many of our body guards fell on
" the occasion; and you now see us here, ex-
" posed perhaps to fresh dangers. What is your
" opinion of so deplorable a state of things? Do
" you discover any possibility for us to extricate
" ourselves from this position?"

Such was the substance of a recital which affected me too much to be erased from my memory. I never witnessed greater dignity in grief, more mildness in affliction. As the conversation lasted long, the Queen stated to me, in detail, the causes of complaint given to her, by several persons who had constantly laboured to injure her in the opinion of the people, and even in the King's affections.

But she spoke to me, in a language free from bitterness, of those, among my friends, who were at the head of the popular party. " They have in-
" jured us," she said, " by directing heavy blows
" at the royal authority; but, far from confound-
" ing them with those who have stirred up an
" enraged populace against us, I believe they are
" well-disposed to protect us from similar excesses

" in future, and to give their support to what " little authority is still left in our hands.

" This is, especially, the duty of M. de la " Fayette, your friend and relative; whatever I " may have to reproach him with, I must acknow- " ledge that, at Versailles, as soon as he was ap- " prised of our danger, he came to our assistance, " and, in so doing, rendered us the most essential " service. You will often see him; take care to re- " mind him of what he promised to me. It be- " hoves his honor, as he is in command at Paris, " to take care that the dignity and safety of the " King shall not be exposed to any danger."

After expressing to this Princess, how deeply I shared in her affliction, I told her, " that I had " no wish more at heart than to prove deserving " of her confidence; but that, having so recently " arrived at Paris, I could not yet entertain a " very fixed and settled opinion, upon all the " events which she had related, or their probable " result. Nevertheless, Madam," I added, " if I " may judge of them from the opinion entertained " in other countries, and from what has already " been told to me here, I think that every passed " occurrence may be attributed to the too frequent " changes of ministers and systems, to the hasty " and ill-supported measures of authority, the exile " and recall of the parliaments, the convocation " of the States-General in the vicinity of a me- " tropolis which is the focus of intrigues and agita- " tions, the want of decision on the most important

" questions, a decision, which ought to have pre-
" ceded the convocation of that assembly; and
" lastly, to the contempt shewn to the *Tiers-*
" *Etat*, and to certain imprudent measures which
" have created, in the minds of the people, the
" most violent spirit of animosity against the
" privileged classes.

" It would, now, be as painful as unavailing to
" look back to the past. I know not if, in the
" then disposition of the public mind, a revolution
" might have been averted or deferred to a later
" period. But, we are forced to acknowledge
" it, that revolution is now accomplished; the ge-
" neral wish of the entire nation has declared itself
" for a representative government. If this object
" be pursued with sincerity, and frankly carried
" into effect, we may perhaps enjoy, in imitation
" of England, that security which is derived from
" the royal authority, together with all the advan-
" tages of liberty; but, if we act otherwise, I
" cannot contemplate, without fear, the precipice
" into which we should be drawn by an ineffectual
" resistance: there is another way of curbing li-
" centiousness, than by setting up a legal and
" prudent liberty in opposition to it."

" I perceive," said the Queen, " from what has
" been said to you, that you believe me to differ
" greatly in opinion with you. To-morrow, how-
" ever, you shall hear from me, and will find that
" I am not so unreasonable as it is imagined."

Accordingly, Madam Campan brought me, on the following day, a packet from the Queen, the

contents of which had not been communicated to her. I opened it, and to my great surprise, I found in it, a note in the hand-writing of M. Mounier, whose ideas were much in unison with the principles of the British government.

This first conversation with the Queen ended in very flattering praises, which she condescended to bestow upon my conduct in Russia, and in a variety of questions relative to the character of Catherine, and to the afflicting state of health of the Emperor her brother, when I left him at Vienna.

When I was introduced to the King, I found him mournful and dejected; he addressed only a few words to me, but with extreme kindness, on the subject of my negociation, said that he saw me again with pleasure, and dismissed me.

My next duty was of another kind; I rendered, to M. de Montmorin, an account of my mission. Of all the pictures which had been given me of the revolution, the one I received from this minister was by far the most gloomy.

Possessed, however, of a correct and enlightened mind, he was well satisfied of the necessity of ending our troubles by a sincere course of conduct, and by a compact that would embrace all the elements of a good representative government; but he was persuaded, at the same time, that this remedy would be rendered impracticable by the violence of many contending passions.

" The people, he said, on the one hand, appear " to reject, in its impetuosity, every other course

" but a pure democracy, which infallibly leads to
" anarchy; they will, shortly, turn against those
" who now attempt to subject them to legal re-
" straint. On the other hand, the court, the aris-
" tocracy, and all those who surround the King, as
" obstinately reject whatever is not calculated to
" uphold the monarchy, such as it formerly existed.

" You know the extent of my affection for the
" King; he is young, virtuous, and benevolent;
" but his goodness is devoid of character. He
" cannot offer resistance to those he fears, any
" more than to those who are dear to him; I at-
" tempt, in vain, to induce him to follow up with
" firmness any plan he might adopt. Indeed,
" you may believe me, this fatal struggle be-
" tween a popular party in a state of irritation
" and a weak monarch, will end in our leaving a
" republic behind us."

I confess that these words, which were converted, by time, into just prophecies, did not, then, create a strong impression upon my mind. I viewed them as the effect of a melancholy mood, that led him to indulge in chimerical ideas; and there was not the least appearance, at that period, of a republican party, which only reared its head two years afterwards, subsequently to the King's departure for Varennes.

My conversation with persons so far removed from each other by their respective ranks and opinions, in gratifying my anxious curiosity, already began to give me some clear idea of the state in which I found my country at my return;

and, in order to render my information more complete, I always attended the sittings of the National Assembly.

I had been residing, for five years, in countries, the governments of which had undergone no change, and which preserved, unalloyed, the old social order, their ancient forms and customs, as well as the perpetual and settled distinctions of ranks, and of classes of society.

Nothing, therefore, that I had seen, was calculated to erase from my recollection the state in which I had left France; consequently, I beheld, at first, with great astonishment, in an august public assembly, the meeting of cardinals, bishops, curates, generals, officers, grandees, nobles, land proprietors, magistrates, lawyers, and, lastly, what we call citizens, mixed together, and seated on the same benches, without any order, or any distinction of ranks.

But, after this momentary surprise, I fell into another, when I found that the sight of this meeting was not sufficient to open the eyes of the partisans of the old system. It was no longer, however, an empty name of *equality* that resounded in their ears; equality itself stood in full vigour before them. Nevertheless, they doubted, and, perhaps, still doubt its existence.

The most remarkable difference between them, and those persons whose opinions agree with mine, is, that we consider the revolution, in so far, irrevocably completed; whereas, they cannot bring their minds to believe it. They forget that

it is possible to abolish what is merely recorded in written laws, but never what is once engraved in our hearts.

I cannot pretend to say what will be the judgment of posterity, respecting all the accusations directed against the Constituent Assembly; but what appears to me quite certain is, that all its most ardent detractors will be compelled to admit, that it was composed of the most remarkable men of the period, whether in respect to their professions, or their opinions: they will acknowledge that there never yet was seen such a combination of talents; that, in discussing questions the most important to the interest of mankind, there was, on every side, a brilliant display of all the powers of logic, and all the resources of eloquence.

If, in short, that judgment be not influenced by what has depended much more upon circumstances than upon men, and some allowance accordingly, be made for the passions of the time, the Constituent Assembly cannot be denied the glory of having laid down the principles of the representative government, which now rules over us, principles adopted by our sovereigns, triumphant after thirty years of struggles, of wars, victories, and reverses, and now forming the basis of the laws which at present govern almost every nation in both hemispheres.

For my part, I can never forget the impression made upon my mind by the vehemence of Mirabeau, the harmony and pomp of Abbé Maury,

the brilliant and extempore talent of Cazales, the close arguments of Barnave, the elegant keenness of Abbé de Montesquiou, the profound and luminous logic of Duport, the austere and cold reasoning of Malouet, the clearness of Thouret's reports, and the various merits of other orators, so abundant, that an enumeration of them would carry me beyond limits.

I followed these important debates with an avidity always increasing, which, however, excited very opposite emotions in my mind: at one time, I felt myself raised to a degree of enthusiasm, by that ardent love of country and of liberty, by all those noble sentiments which I had always admired in the history of the ancients, and which were re-echoed at our national rostrum; at another, I yielded to an apprehension, which was but too well founded, when I witnessed the repeated blows levelled at all our old institutions, and when I reflected on the consequences of a revolution calculated to affect so many interests, to thwart so many habits, to make so many fortunes change hands, to excite so many discords, and draw down upon us so many enemies. But, at last, as I was naturally disposed to indulge in the blandishments of hope, I finished by cherishing the idea, perhaps a too chimerical one, of seeing, at a future time, all private interests combining together, and merging into the general one.

Be this as it may, I shall always consider that many of my cotemporaries form a very hasty judgment of an assembly, which reckoned among

its members, such men as those I have already mentioned, such characters as Bailly, the brothers Mathieu de Montmorency, La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, Crillon, du Chatelet, Tracy, Montlosier, Boisgelin, Talleyrand, the Archbishop of Vienna, the Chevalier de Boufflers, Champagny, Maubourg, Rabaut-St.-Etienne, Boissy-d'Anglas, Emmery, Castries, Custine, Beaumetz, Toulongeon, Cicé, Bonnay, Noailles, Chapelier, D'Agues-seau, La Luzerne, Broglie, Beauharnais, &c.

If such men have failed in their endeavors to repress the passions of the age, and have even, occasionally, given way to them, may it not be presumptuous in others to flatter themselves that they would have been more prudent, more happy, or possessed of greater foresight?

My evenings were employed in going through the different saloons of the capital, in re-visiting those societies which had been the delight of my younger days. I found them more lively, more full of wit, more animated than ever; they exhibited no symptom of heaviness or languor. I fancied, however, that they had lost their most amiable attractions; I no longer found, in them, that gentleness, that attic spirit, that urbanity of manners, which had so long distinguished them as the schools, where grace and taste were to be seen in their purest colors.

Political passions, by forcing themselves into our saloons, had nearly transformed them into arenas, where the most opposite opinions came

contact, and were perpetually at issue. nal discussion had given way to disputa- ; politics had become the sole and constant of conversation, and rarely yielded a mo- nt's respite, for introducing the subject of arts iences, or of gallantry.

ery one declaimed; few lent a hearing; the the tone alike indicated anger. Persons posite opinions would often form into sepa- groups, in the same saloon. A spirit of ani- ty, always on the increase, soon operated to te a disturbance, and a total disunion in these ties, which had banished amenity of manners, entle link that had, hitherto, held them to- r.

houses, frequented by persons of the same of thinking, the debates were not less ani- d, nor the subjects of conversation more . The only difference was, that the spirit of bitterness was not carried to such extremes.

Women were far from benefiting by so great a change. The softer passions are alone adapted to their grace, delicacy, voice, and features; modesty is their first charm; nothing, therefore, so ill become them as political passions; bitterness robs them of their ornaments, and anger of their beauty.

Several, however, amongst them, shone in those philosophical conversations, by their eloquence and sallies of wit; I shall only give the name of one, Madame de Stael: few orators could exceed

her in choice of words, or in strength of reasoning; she astonished, and was persuasive and convincing in her arguments.

Such conversations always possessed the animation of a powerful interest; but it was constantly the same; I vainly sought, in them, that variety, that playfulness, that spirit of mutual forbearance, that amiable levity, which, in former days, gave them so much attraction.

For this reason my brother, Viscount de Segur, one of the most agreeable men of his time, whose wit held all painful work in aversion, and would only cull the flower of every subject, humorously said: "I cannot bear that revolution; *it has* "*spoiled my Paris;* and, whilst it boasts of a chi- "merical philosophy, of an ardent love for the "public welfare, of an absolute denial of every "private interest, it does no more than extend to "all the ambition of a few: it might be cha- "racterised in two words: "*get out of this place,* "*that I may occupy it myself.*

"I do not, however, accuse any one of the "errors of that revolution; for all, at first, "stood up for it; each, according to his power "and his means, attempted to secure his share in "it; and, from the King, down to the humblest "individual in his kingdom, all have labored, "more or less, at the work; the one allowed it "to come up to his shoe-buckle; the other, to his "garter; another, again, to his waist; a fourth, "to his stomach; I see others, in short, who will "only be satisfied when it has reached above their

" heads. I wish them every kind of happiness, " but must always reproach them with *having* " *spoiled my Paris;* because, of all their wrongs, " that which I am least disposed to forgive, is " their having turned the capital of pleasures into " a focus of ennui and of contentions."

This was the language, these were the opinions of a numerous class, the brilliant and frivolous portion of that court and city youth, accustomed to live for no other object, than the enjoyment of love and battles, of pleasures, and the fine arts.

What occasioned my greatest astonishment, was the sudden metamorphosis of some former philosophers, who declaimed with bitterness against a revolution so long provoked by their language and their writings; it must be supposed that they only cherished it in theory, and when they were the exclusive professors of its doctrines. The abbé Sabbatier, being one day found fault with, for his indisposition against the States-General, which he had so loudly called for, and of which he might well be considered the father: " Yes," he replied; " *but another nurse has been given to my child.*" It must, however, be acknowledged, that very few had thus altered their principles and their language.

I carefully watched the conduct of the other classes of the numerous population of Paris: they were all, with few exceptions, animated with a very ardent attachment to the liberty which had been promised to them; but shewed a still greater desire for equality; and undoubtedly, the

French people would, long ago, have secured its happiness if, in their constant efforts to uphold that liberty and equality, they could have stood up for the defence of the former, with that obstinacy which the latter had called into action.

It would be difficult to form a conception of the many contending aspects which Paris presented at the time, to the contemplation of an astonished observer; I shall endeavor to exhibit a slight idea of this, by a single example. I was apprized one morning, that my aged father, whilst suffering from the gout, and from his wounds, had gone out, on foot, to visit his friend, Baron de Besenval, who was then a prisoner in the Chatelet. I am likewise informed, that evil-designing people had collected a mob, and excited great disturbance round the prison. Fearing that some accident might have happened to my father, I hasten to join him.

An immense crowd, collected on the quay, was obstructing the passage, notwithstanding the efforts of the national guard, and filling the air with their dreadful clamors. These maniacs accused the public authorities of treachery, the judges of procrastination; and loudly demanded the head of the prisoner.

It cost me much time and difficulty to penetrate through this lawless crowd. At last, I reached the prison, obtained admission by a wicket under a low gate, hurried with disgust through the dark windings of this abode of crime and vice, and ascending the staircase of the tower, I entered a

decent apartment, where I found the Baron de Besenval, not only presenting a calm and manly appearance, but conversing in his usual flow of spirits, with my father, the Chevalier de Coigny, the Count de Pusigneux, my brother, and several ladies, as amiable as they were handsome, who frequently came, with other friends, to soften his captivity. It may well be imagined that I felt great emotion, at the contrast between the rage that was venting itself outside of the prison, and the sincerity pervading within, in spite of the clamors of those infuriated people, which incessantly resounded in our ears.

An hour afterwards, finding that the tumult had ceased, and satisfied that my father's carriage would come to take him up, I went away, and continued my excursion. When I arrived at the place de Greve, I saw a numerous assemblage of people which the guard was attempting, with much difficulty, to disperse. Their object was to swell their numbers, and return, the next day, in greater force, to renew their attack on the prison.

No less indignant at the sight, than deafened by their clamors, I proceeded to the Hall; in this place, a very different scene attracted my attention; it was an extensive market, in full activity, and carried on in the midst of a profound peace.

A few days afterwards, I repaired to the Palais-Royal; I entered its garden, the centre of industry, the focus of corruption, an arena always thrown open to factions, who often made it the

rendez-vous of their conspiracies, and the theatre of their struggles.

A crowd, attracted by curiosity, were closely ranged round a man who was mounted upon a table; this declaiming demagogue was railing, with vehemence, at the perfidy of the court, the pride of the nobles, the cupidity of the rich, the sloth of the legislators; he excited the passions by the most incendiary gesticulations, to which some replied by applauding, and others by insulting him.

Disgusted at the orator's impudence, I started for the Tuileries. The weather was beautiful; the terrace and alleys were crowded with persons enjoying their peaceful promenade. The most lovely women, with dresses as varied as the flowers of a parterre, displayed their ornaments and their charms in this beautiful garden. It seemed like a holiday, and I might, at the moment, have fancied myself removed to the distance of a hundred leagues, from the stormy scenes I had just witnessed.

Descending, however, near the *pont tournant*, and seeing a great number of persons running towards the Champs-Elysées, I followed them, and, on approaching the great square, I discovered a crowd of armed men; they were old soldiers of the French guards, who were going to that point of meeting, for the purpose of executing a meditated plan of revolt. M. de la Fayette, informed of this assemblage of people, soon hastened to the spot, with some battalions of the National Guard,

with a view to surround them. They surrendered, and were quickly disarmed.

I returned home to my family, thoughtful, and wholly absorbed in reflections on the many scenes I had witnessed in so short a time; and I went at night to the Opera, in order to chase away these mournful recollections.

On this occasion, I was disposed to believe that I had hitherto been in a dream. The crowd of spectators, the charm of the music, the elegant variety of the ballets, the freshness of the decorations, the magic of the performance, the reunion, in the boxes, of all that was most distinguished at the court and in town, the calmness and gaiety pervading every countenance and every look, all presented to me the image of happiness, security and good harmony: no one appeared to suspect that several quarters of Paris had just been the theatre of seditious movements and of alarming proceedings.

This plain and faithful account will, no doubt, suffice to give to those, who have not lived in France at the time, some outline of what might then be seen in Paris, in a single day.

This agitation too clearly proved that we were far from recovering the calmness of a constituted and settled state; that epoch, too short in its duration, was, however, unquestionably, the least stormy of the revolution; and, in spite of the attempts of several factions, the National Guards and the administrative authorities of the kingdom,

succeeded, for a time, in maintaining an order and a tranquillity, in France, which commanded my astonishment.

There was, even, a moment in the following year, when the French nation appeared to indulge, with a kind of transport, in the hope of a general reconciliation: those days of enthusiasm were the days of the federation, that took place at the Champ de Mars, in the year 1790. But the first part of these Memoirs must terminate here; and I should be anticipating the facts to be related in the sequel of the work, were I to describe, at present, that imposing reunion, in which men of all classes and of all parties, appeared to be moved by one feeling; accordingly, the love of country, of the King, and of liberty, was then proclaimed by the entire French nation.

Harrassed by so many troubles and dissensions, every one then appeared to embrace, with ardor, the wish expressed for so desirable a reunion. Consequently, notwithstanding the effervescence of the public mind, the struggle of private interests, and the opposition in opinions, the man of the most desponding character could not have conceived the possibility of that new and frightful revolution, which, two years afterwards, subverted the throne, and established, for a time, under the name of a republic, the reign of terror and anarchy.

Nevertheless, at the epoch of which I have just sketched the outline, some alarm was beginning to be felt at the animosity of two parties, furiously struggling against one another; but their contests

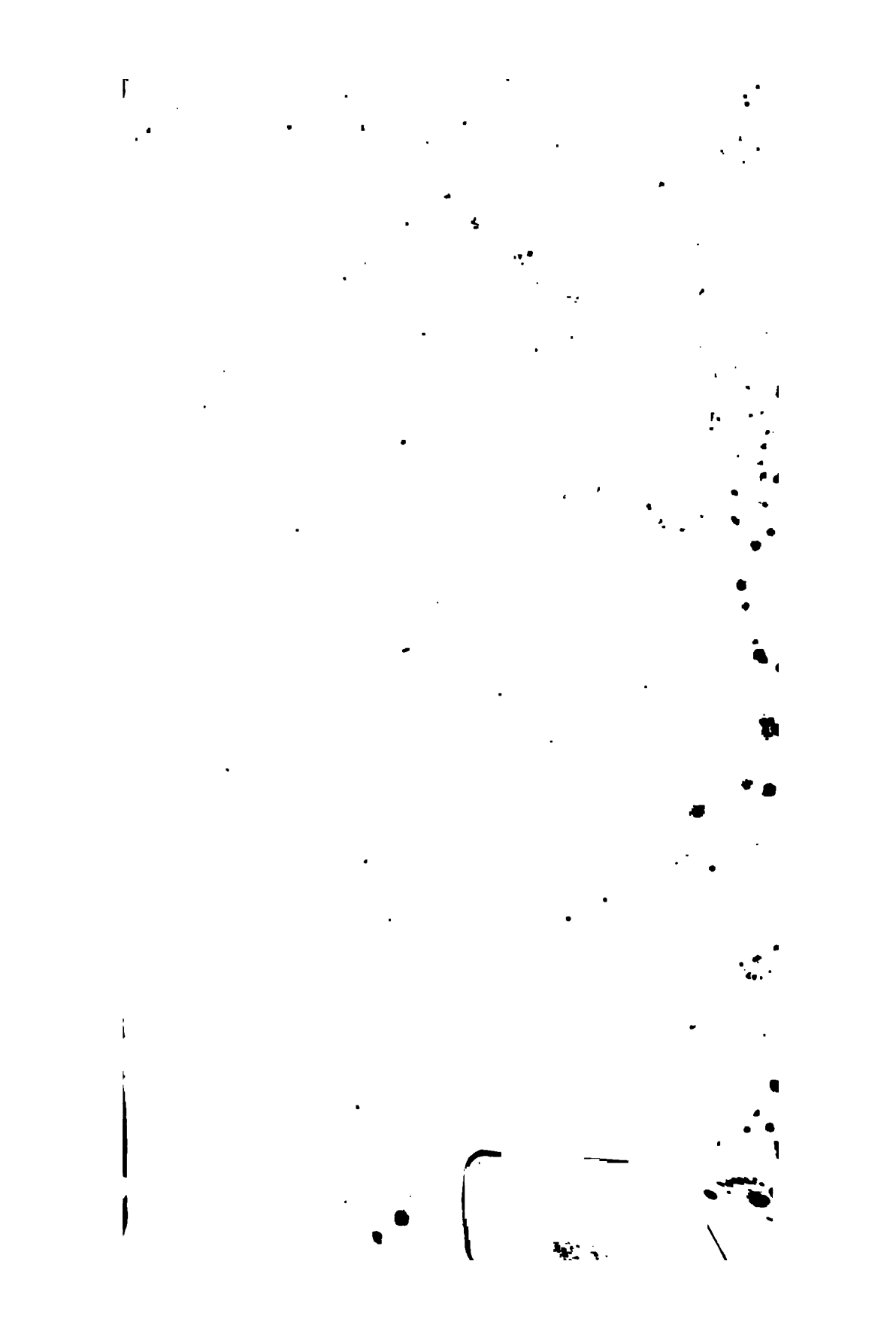
were, as yet, confined to the rostrum, and the most penetrating mind could not have foreseen, that the fire of those dissensions, spreading from day-to-day, in the midst of a general overthrow would take the round of the globe; and that the civilized world, would be, as it is at the present day, wholly divided into those two parties, the one obstinately clinging to the banners of the old social order, the other advancing under the standard of the new one.

They speak a different language, and give to the same words a different meaning; they attach an opposite sense to them, and might, therefore, talk for ever, without coming to a proper understanding. The terms of *rights*, *duties*, *justice*, *honor*, *order*, *liberty*, *toleration*, *public opinion*, *general interest*, *virtues*, and *political crimes*, have acquired for each party different significations, without any common link.

In Europe, three great nations, and a few tottering governments, still defend the ancient system; whilst the new principles are adopted by the remaining European nations, and by all those of America, or the immense majority of the population of the two civilized worlds.

This reflection, however slightly dwelt upon, the smallest attention given to the rapid strides made by arts and sciences, by public industry and wealth, in free countries, will assist in unravelling the book of futurity.

The Second Part of my Memoirs will consist of a narrative of events, in which I have, more or less, taken a part, during the space of thirty-six years. I shall have occasion to draw many pictures, to sketch many portraits, and to relate many facts and anecdotes; this forms my present occupation. But I think I have attained the age of that old Archbishop of Granada, so humorously described by Le Sage. I must, therefore, hasten to terminate my work, or to stop in sufficient time to spare myself the unpleasantness of receiving the candid, wholesome, but rather unpalatable advice of some open minded Gil Blas of Santillana, of the present day.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME

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